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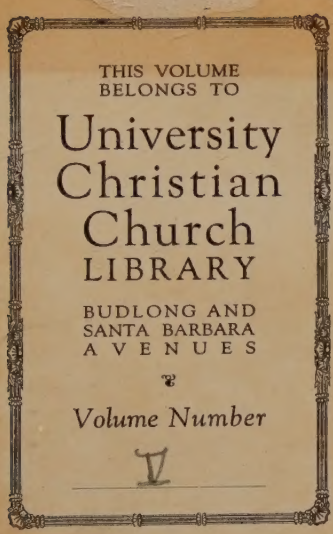
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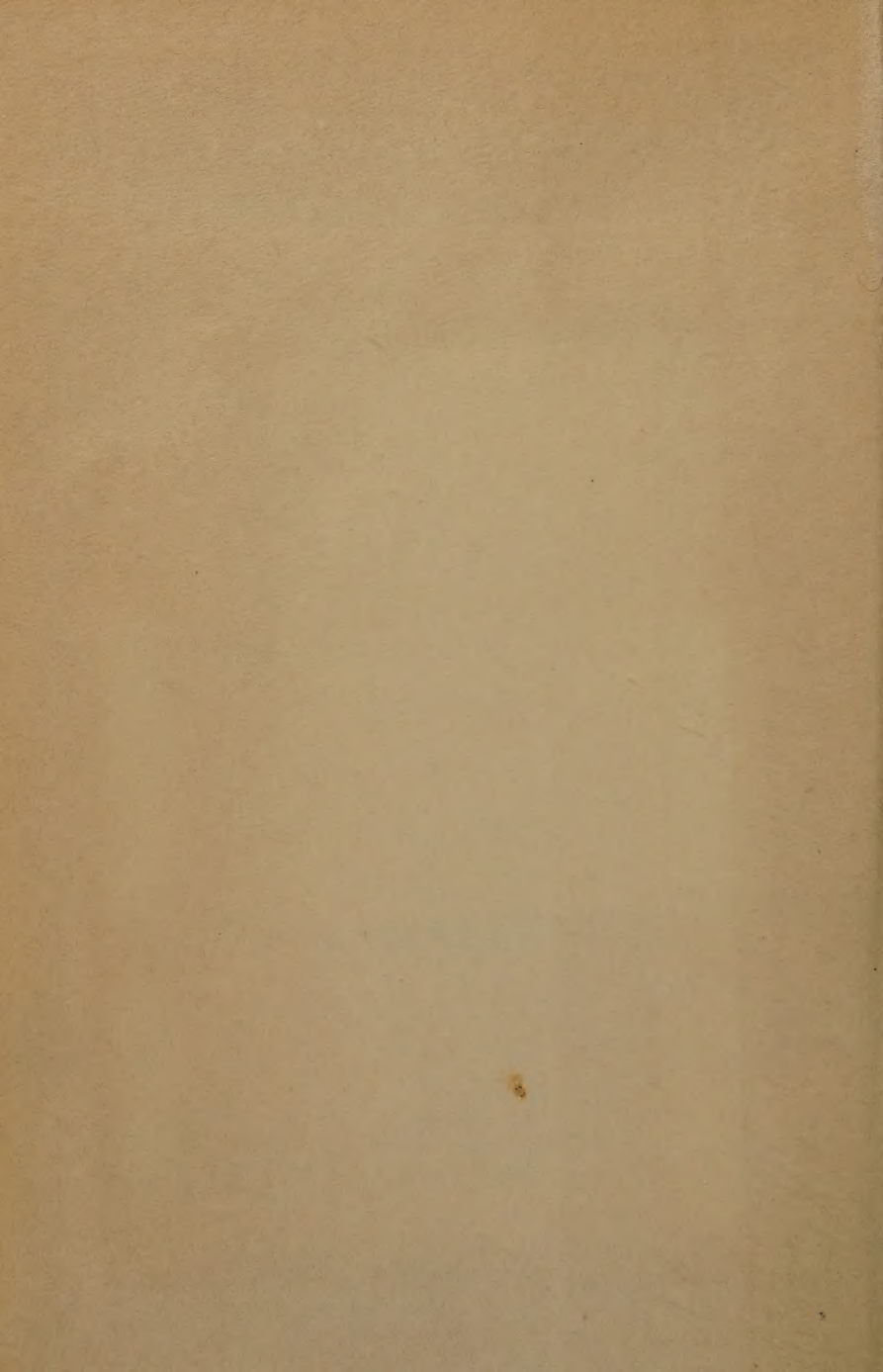
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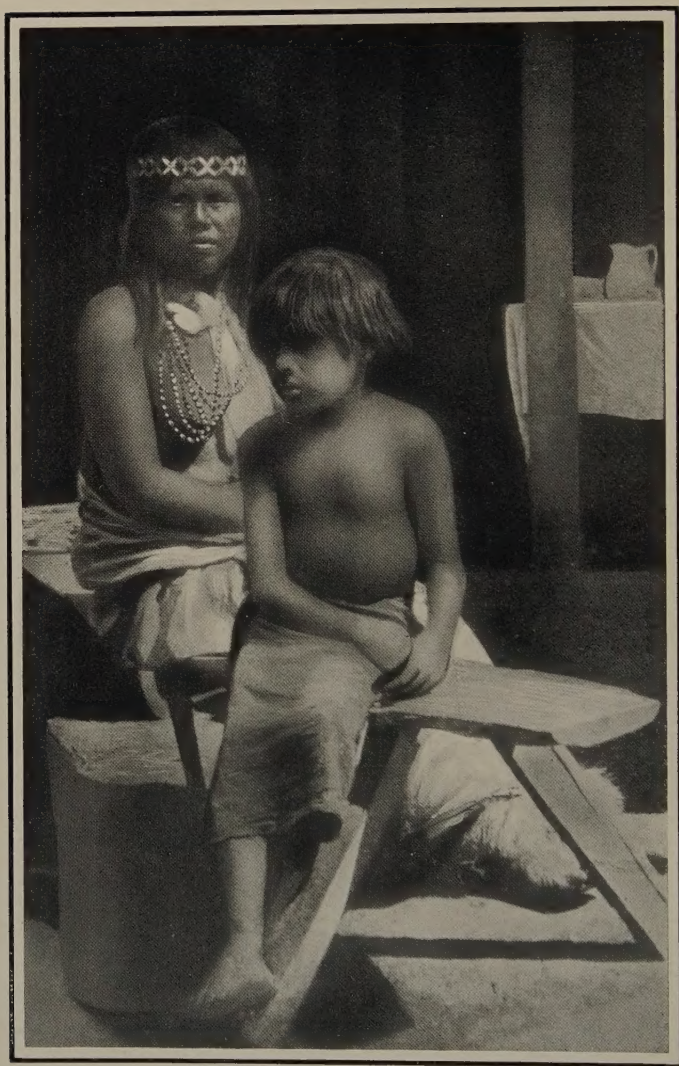
A CHURCH IN THE WILDS

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### TYPICAL MASCOY WOMAN AND CHILD

They belong to a clan living north of the Rio Verde. The palm-log hut is one of the improved Indian buildings. The tablecloth and jug indicate the social advance.

# A CHURCH IN THE WILDS

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSION AMONGST THE  
HITHERTO SAVAGE AND INTRACTABLE NATIVES  
OF THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO

BY

W. BARBROOKE GRUBB

"EL PACIFICADOR DE LOS INDIOS"

AUTHOR OF "AN UNKNOWN PEOPLE IN AN UNKNOWN LAND"

WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS & MAPS

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The remarkable Story of the Establishment of the South  
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BY

**W. BARBROOKE GRUBB**

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## PART I



# A CHURCH IN THE WILDS

## CHAPTER I

### A UNIQUE FIELD

THE origin of the Red Man, and his history previous to the Columbian period, lie buried in mystery, up to to-day no satisfactory solution of the problem having been arrived at. Tribes exist in the great Southern portion of the New World, of whom nothing whatever is known, and vast regions still remain unexplored.

The Continent affords to the world an interesting study in political development. Those who have been, and still are, puzzling over the question as to whether the white and the coloured man should be allowed to exist side by side in the same land, and even be admitted to equal rights, will find that the fusion of the many distinct races, pre-Columbian, African, and European, which are to be found in the South American Republics, is a subject worthy of their best attention.

The problems which the Church of England has to deal with abroad are as difficult and as full of interest as any attracting the attention of either the historian, the scientist, the politician, or the sociologist ; and perhaps those entrusted to her agency, the South American Missionary Society, in her mission to the Paraguayan Chaco, stand unique among the many peculiar situations which she has had to face up to the

## 20 AN UNEXPLORED COUNTRY

present. The Society's missions in Tierra del Fuego, although characterized by hardship, danger, martyrdom, and loneliness, differ but slightly in their record from similar missions carried on in the Southern seas. That to the Amazon, long years past, was very like the pioneer stage of some missions in Central Africa; that to the Puelches of Patagonia never advanced far enough to take specialized form; while the mission to the Mapuches of Araucania, living as they do in a civilized land, interspersed with the Chilians, might easily be compared with a mission to Kaffirs in South Africa, or some low-caste tribe in India. In the Paraguayan Chaco, however, conditions were entirely different, as were also the methods pursued, and the objects aimed at. The early missionaries there came into contact with savage tribes who were absolutely independent, and who owned no authority but their own. They inhabited a vast district, bounded on the north, south, east, and west by civilized Powers; yet it was a region practically unexplored, and the languages of its numerous tribes still remained an enigma to the world.

Although for some generations the Indian territory of the Chaco had been claimed by the adjoining republics, no systematic effort was made to establish dominion over it, but, about the time of the advent of the mission, the Government of Paraguay proceeded to sell off to speculators the whole of their portion of this vast extent of country, amounting to some 72,000 square miles. This they succeeded in doing by marking off the bank of the River Paraguay into sections a league wide, and drawing imaginary lines from these due west to the frontier. In a very short time the Government had sold the entire country, even the few reserves they had at first determined to maintain. The early missionaries were therefore confronted with the anomaly of a country as large as Great Britain practically unexplored, its inhabitants heathen barbarians, no centre of government or representa-



tive authority in the whole of the vast interior, and yet the whole land, although unsurveyed, sold by the Government and bought by speculators in Europe and elsewhere, none of whom had ever seen the lands which they had purchased.

Naturally there were no such things as roads in the country, and no waterways of which the missionaries could make use. The people were nomadic hunters, and had no fixed villages, nor had they any secure or suitable food-supply upon which Europeans might subsist. There were no foreigners whatever in the country, none even corresponding to the Arabs in Africa, or to the caravan traders of other parts.

There was no one for the wandering missionary to apply to for guides or servants, as no such person as a native king existed, or indeed any recognized authority, beyond that of the headmen of the numberless little clans which formed encampments here and there, moving at will from place to place as the exigencies of the chase demanded. Every encampment was separate and independent, and the itinerant missionary had to deal personally with each one in detail.

This was truly a strange and unique position for a European to find himself in. Last century such conditions could have been met with in many parts of North America, Australia, and other parts of the world, but not as in Paraguay, within fifteen or twenty miles of modern civilization. It is almost inconceivable to imagine the lonely European in the midst of such a wilderness, entirely dependent upon his own tact and resourcefulness, and yet still within the sound of the whistle of the modern mail steamer on the River Paraguay.

The South American Missionary Society sought to form not only a Christian Church among these savage and nomadic tribes, but also industrial communities, and was entrusted by the Paraguayan Government, who claimed that region as their territory, with the task of binding the tribes together

## 22 THE CHACO AND ITS PEOPLE

in unity, and of instructing them in government. The policy of the mission was to endeavour to make the people rule themselves, manage and extend their own Church, form their own missionary agencies, and in every way work out their own destiny. Although the missionaries could have assumed authority, they sought rather to keep in the background, and act more as advisers than dictators of policy.

Treating of the Chaco in general terms, it was, in the time of Spanish rule, a great undefined region stretching from Tucuman, Jujuy, and Tarija on the west, to the Rivers Parana and Paraguay on the east, and from Santa Fé in the south, to Matto Grosso in the north. The Paraguayan Chaco (reduced to about half its size since the great war of 1865-1870) is now bounded on the south and west by the River Pilcomayo, on the north by the 22nd parallel, south latitude, and on the east by the River Paraguay. For the most part it is a level plain, with an imperceptible rise towards the north-west, abounding in swamps, sluggish streams, and numerous palm forests, except in the west and north, where it partakes of the nature of park-like country, and of dense scrubby forest-land. This wilderness country is subject to the extremes of drought and flood, with few natural resources, compelling its inhabitants to lead a nomadic and precarious life.

The tribes inhabiting the present section owned by Paraguay embrace chiefly the Lenguas (or more correctly the Mascosy), the Suhin, the Towothli, the Aii, and the Kyisapang, or Sanapana. The two most widespread are the Lengua-Mascosy and the Suhin. The languages spoken are so distinct that each demands separate study, and to acquire a knowledge of these unwritten and unknown tongues is a work demanding patience, quickness of perception, and long years of persistent study.

The population is sparse, for it cannot amount to more

## WORKING UNDER DIFFICULTIES 23

than 30,000 or 35,000 in all.\* It is unquestionable that it is steadily diminishing, except among those of the Lengua-Mascoy, who are under the direct influence of the mission. Scourges, previously unknown, such as smallpox and measles, have worked considerable havoc among the people. Tribal wars on the frontiers, and destructive heathen customs, such as the practice of infanticide, are also important factors in the decline of the population. Infanticide is the result of a strong disinclination to allow the population to increase, because of the responsibility incurred thereby, and the greater effort required to obtain food. The Indians' power of mobility which enables them to attack or escape from their enemies, or in time of peace to move from camp to camp, engaging in a round of festive revelry, would be greatly diminished if hampered by the presence of children. The women, too, strongly object to be burdened by a numerous family of small and helpless children, claiming their constant attention and care.

The Society was faced with the problem of founding practically five distinct missions in order satisfactorily to evangelize this region, and this would have meant devoting the lives of three or four men to each tribe, although in numbers only a few thousands each. Had the resources of the missionary world, and the keenness of the missionary Church, been at all adequate to such an expenditure, this policy would have been fully justified, as the soul of man is beyond price. But limited as it was by the want of men, means, and the spirit of loyalty in the home Church to her Master's commands, it had to consider carefully how the

\* Within the actual limits of the section commonly considered as belonging to Paraguay, the population cannot exceed 20,000, but the limit not having been fixed it is difficult accurately to apportion the population of various sections. The estimate 30,000 or 35,000 refers to the whole territory claimed by Paraguay, but this is not agreed to by Bolivia.

## 24      LANGUAGES OF THE TRIBES

most work could be accomplished with the small means at its disposal.

Providence led the Society to begin work among the Lengua-Mascoy tribe, and when active operations were commenced the pioneers were in absolute ignorance of the people, their country, and language. The first Christian Church of any denomination in this region is that among the Lengua-Mascoy Indians, and through them it is quite possible that the other Chaco tribes may be evangelized, and become incorporated in one Church. The various tribes mentioned can readily acquire each other's languages. A Towothli girl, for example, ignorant of one word of Mascoy, after one year's residence on the mission-station at Măkthlawaiya, was on familiar terms with all, and speaking the new language with ease. Along the tribal borders it is quite a common thing to find bilingualists, and there are not a few who understand three languages. From this there is every reason to conclude that there should be no difficulty in making the Mascoy the language of the tribes. A successful precedent exists for this, which anyone can see working satisfactorily at the present time as the result of the Jesuit methods in Paraguay two hundred years ago. They adopted the Guarani tongue as the dominant language, and gradually compelled small tribes, speaking distinct tongues or dialects, to use Guarani as the colloquial.

There is, however, one matter of great interest which has been suggested from the study of the Chaco Indian's folklore, religious ideas, and social customs—namely, that at some time, not very remote, these tribes just mentioned had actually used one common language, and were in all probability a people of common origin.

Since their tendency is, on the whole, to be on friendly terms with each other, and their characteristics are in many ways alike, it would not be an impossible undertaking to amalgamate them again as one people.

## CHAPTER II

### A RIVER BASE

IN spite of the fact that foreign missions have so greatly developed during the last thirty years, that missionaries have multiplied in all parts of the world, that many books have been written, pamphlets published, great conferences held, and that hundreds of thousands of our countrymen have become accustomed to meetings of all kinds in and out of churches dealing with the great subject of missions to the heathen, there still exists a lamentable amount of ignorance as to the manner of life and methods of work in vogue for winning the non-Christian nations to the standard of the Cross.

Many are apt to think that missions in all parts of the world are carried on in more or less the same way—in fact, the less educated in this subject regard missions to the heathen in much the same way as they would the ordinary work of a parish at home.

Missionaries are not turned out by machinery. Centuries of organization and development have so influenced Church-life at home that there is necessarily very little difference between the work carried on in the various parishes. A man trained in Canada can with ease take up similar Church-work in England or Australia, or even in the kindred Churches in Germany, Norway, or Switzerland, provided he can speak the language; but such a man's training and experience would serve him little in the midst of a savage race inhabiting so



wild and resourceless a country as the Paraguayan Chaco, and speaking an unknown language, and amongst a people possessing not even a glimmer of our Christian faith, whose whole idea of morality and social life, and whose methods of thought and reasoning are as different as it is possible to be from that of European nations.

The first people to settle in an unexplored and savage land, whatever their object may be, are naturally brought face to face with peculiar difficulties ; but in the case of the missionary who goes out with the view of mixing with and winning the natives instead of being content simply to guard his position, the undertaking proves a much severer task. It was in this strange and difficult position, aggravated by want of experience, that the first missionaries to the Paraguayan Chaco found themselves.

Twenty-three years ago the late Adolpho Henricksen, at one time the British and Foreign Bible Society's agent in the Argentine Republic, landed in Paraguay with two companions, with instructions from the South American Missionary Society to search for a place to settle in, from which they might study the problem of the evangelization of the Indians, and endeavour to win them for Christ.

No secular company would have attempted an undertaking of equal magnitude, ill-equipped as was this little company of three missionaries. Purchasing a boat and putting their belongings into it, they moved up and down the River Paraguay, and eventually pitched their camp on the side of a little creek in the Paraguayan Chaco, and called by them Riacho Fernandez. To the north, south, and west of them, for hundreds of miles, lay the vast Chaco region. That there was danger in living among its inhabitants was evident from the experience of past expeditions, and from that of the Spanish peoples who were separated from them only by the river. The general opinion was that it was perfectly



hopeless to attempt to reclaim the Indians from savagery, or to attempt to make useful members of society of them, and that the sooner these rude tribes died off and made way for higher races the better. The missionaries, pitching their tent, and later on building a rough log-hut, led a life of privation and hardship, seeking to win the confidence and friendship of the few Indians who frequented that neighbourhood.

Henricksen was much occupied during the initial months in arranging for the future of the mission which it was his privilege to found. This entailed upon him fatiguing journeys and much exposure, and being a man already in middle life, and not previously accustomed to such hardship, his health broke down, and, to the great loss of the Society and all concerned, he died in Asuncion after only a full year of direct work. A few months later I joined his two companions at Riacho Fernandez; but within a year I found myself alone, as they unfortunately had to abandon the work from ill-health and other reasons.

In Henricksen's time the cacique (chief) of the village adjacent to Riacho Fernandez was given a present of three mares, in order to win his protection; and so long as his party remained there, he had been given to understand that he would receive the same annually. I knew that in Africa and in other places it was the custom to curry favour with the rulers by giving them presents, and also that such rulers often exhibited much covetousness, and were continually demanding increased gifts. During my short experience of ten months at Riacho Fernandez, I had seen quite enough of the chief's rapacity, and had satisfied myself that he had not used his power to help us as he should. I was convinced that he was only seeking his own ends, and informed him that he would receive no more presents, that from henceforth I did not want his protection, but would depend upon myself.

## 28      A PERILOUS UNDERTAKING

The really difficult part of the enterprise was yet to be undertaken—that of establishing myself among the people, and leading their life. Even if they could not be persuaded to receive me as one of themselves, I was determined not to buy their friendship with gifts, but that they should be encouraged from the very beginning to be independent, and to expect from us nothing but teaching, guidance, and help.

It was very obvious that the only sure method of reaching the Chaco Indians was to leave the river-bank and strike into the interior. I therefore made some journeys into the heart of their country, trusting entirely to a few river Indians to lead me through their wilderness, and bring me back again. It was a comparatively easy matter to make my way from village to village, although I could only make myself understood to my guides by a few words and signs. All that was necessary was an utter indifference to personal danger, together with a capacity to endure fatigue, exposure, and oftentimes hunger and thirst. But my work was not merely that of the explorer; my object was to study the people, win their friendship and confidence, and establish myself among them as one of themselves—a very much more difficult task.

From my experience of a few years among the Yahgan Indians of Tierra del Fuego, I knew enough of the characteristics of savages to appreciate that although they were for the most part children in nature, yet they were potentially dangerous, and required careful handling. Why should these people be willing to receive me as a friend, and assist or help me in any way, unless amply rewarded? Why should they permit me, a foreigner (and at that time they detested all foreigners, and looked upon them as enemies), to exact even a measure of authority over them? Why should they listen to me when I contradicted most of the articles of their faith which they had held for countless centuries? It was not reasonable to expect that they should be willing to cast aside

their old customs, habits, and religious beliefs. Why should they change their whole manner of life, and be prepared to settle down in communities, adopt civilization, and accept strict rules of government, since they were nomads, and free of every man's control?

Humanly speaking, the task that was set before me was wellnigh hopeless and impossible, the more so because I could use nothing but moral persuasion to accomplish the change. But the enterprise was undertaken in the Master's service, and His almighty help and guidance brought it to a successful issue.

## CHAPTER III

### "BURNING MY BOATS"

It was no doubt imprudent to attempt to establish a mission in the interior of a hostile country without a base to work from, and with no means of communication with the outside world. The future of this branch of the Society's work depended entirely upon the failure or success of this venture. In the circumstances, such a course appeared to be courting disaster, and it seemed wiser to adopt the more cautious policy of holding on to the secure position at Riacho Fernandez, in touch with civilization and supplies, where a gradual beginning could be made in acquiring a knowledge of the people and their language, and in making friends with the few river Indians in the vicinity.

But to strike out into the heart of the Chaco, and mix with the people in their main centres, was likely to lead to greater and more speedy results. The question to be debated was, whether the possible realization of the greater aim was worth the risk entailed. I decided that it was, and thus, by cutting myself off from secure touch with civilization, and trusting myself entirely to the mood and temper of the Indians, I "burnt my boats."

The venture was soon to be put to a rigorous test. While making preliminary preparations to start, I was informed that the Indians with whom I had been in touch at Riacho Fernandez had just made an insolent and daring attack upon a store near the river, looting a quantity of goods, and that

they had retired inland, threatening further depredations. This was anything but cheering news to receive on the eve of my endeavour, for these were the very people through whom I had hoped to be able to establish myself in the interior. Without guides, and with no friends to begin with, what could I possibly do? Many were kind enough to assure me that any attempt to win such truculent savages was waste of time, and there certainly seemed to be some weight in their statements that it was not only foolish, but positively dangerous, to attempt to go inland and establish relationships, especially after the recent occurrences. I certainly do not believe in taking absurd risks; nevertheless, it was perfectly clear that, unless one was prepared to face considerable danger, the Chaco tribes would never be won for Christ. I had no idea where these people had gone to or how to find them; it seemed that my way was stopped. However, I took boat up-river to a place called Caraya-vuelta, where I landed with only a small bag containing a few clothes and other necessities, having no horse, arms, or provisions. There was time enough to procure these once I found a way of reaching the people of whom I was in search.

The foreigners who at that time had stockaded a wood-cutting establishment at Caraya-vuelta, smiled incredulously at me when I made inquiries. The Indians, they said, were in no mood to receive visitors, adding that they themselves were fearing a rising. They did what they could to dissuade me, but I learned that about a league distant there was an encampment of a few old people who had taken no part in the late robbery. There was nothing for it but to try and reach this place. On my arrival I managed to persuade one of the party to show me the way to the encampment of the thieves. He was loath to do so, assuring me that the people were hostile; nevertheless, we set off in the evening, and arrived at night, after travelling eight leagues.



I received a better welcome than I had anticipated, although sometimes it appeared as if they would get impatient with me, and that trouble would ensue. We had a long talk about the robbery, and eventually I succeeded in obtaining from them the promise that through me they would make compensation for the damage done by a payment of ostrich plumes and hides, as in time they actually did. I was so encouraged that I proposed to them that they should gather some of their friends, and form a village where I could live with them as one of themselves. To this they were not altogether averse, because, owing to the recent trouble with the foreigners, they were avoiding the vicinity of the river. I accordingly returned to Riacho Fernandez to secure a horse and some necessary equipment, and settled down with them for a time.

I made myself perfectly at home, and in all my actions gave them to understand that they must treat me as if I were a chief, after their manner of chieftainship—that is, making myself one of themselves and only asserting authority in a crisis. It was not always an easy matter to act up to my assumed power, because they did not altogether regard me as superior to themselves. My moustache, for example, caused much amusement at first, but it also lowered me in their estimation. The Indians look upon hair on the face and body as a mark of inferiority, placing its possessors on a level with dogs and other hairy animals. For this reason they willingly endure the painful operation of pulling out all hair except that on the head, which is only allowed to remain as a protection from the sun. My whole appearance gave me no weight with them, but rather the reverse. They used to examine me critically, paying special attention to my chest and feet, and remarking that, although my face had a healthy appearance, the rest of my body looked sickly, and that my feet were soft like an infant's. In accompanying them on



their long marches from one hunting-ground to another, I often had great difficulty in showing the same powers of endurance as they possessed, but had I given in I should have lost prestige among them.

When the food was being prepared after a day's hunt, I took care to demand my portion, but when they were short I shared my own store with them, although they protested, saying that they could endure hunger more easily than I could. Their custom when cutting up an animal was to throw the offal and other waste pieces to the old folks, keeping the best portions for the younger and more vigorous. In this I interfered by taking the offal and flinging it to the younger people, and divided the titbits among the aged.

Such high-handed measures were naturally resented, and I was warned more than once that plots were being laid to put an end to me, and that I had had many narrow escapes, but having once started the policy of making myself a leader among them, I had to continue it. On one occasion, a cautious Indian warned me of my danger, and suggested that I should refrain from using "hard words," as it was not their custom, and made them angry. This I knew, for whenever I spoke severely they left me. I bided my time, and when they returned I used harder words than before. One of the people, remembering the old days, recently remarked to me how wonderfully I had softened down, saying in his Indian way that "my stomach had sweetened." He attributed the change to the fact that I was getting old and had "no skin."

There were frequent feasts in the old days when the proceeds of the chase warranted such extravagance, and in order to establish myself more firmly among them, I used to enter heartily into these festivities, dancing and singing with them night after night, my face and arms painted red with the urucu dye, my head adorned with feathers, and my body ornamented as far as possible in true Indian style.

Thinking that I had secured a firm foothold, I informed them that I was about to proceed to Concepcion to bring up some more of my possessions, and that they were to meet me at some place near the river and carry them out for me. They agreed to this, and I left the few things I had in my hut in their charge. I was delayed in Concepcion longer than I had anticipated, being unable to ascend the river in a canoe owing to the persistent north winds. On my return I was chagrined to hear that my Indians had abandoned the settlement, and were encamped in a forest some two leagues from the river. This was a sad blow to me, for I concluded that they had appropriated my few possessions. The actual loss was trifling compared with the principle involved. If my surmise was correct, how could I possibly trust them again, and without their help how could I reach the further interior and establish myself there? It was necessary to have an interview with them, and find out how things really stood.

I accordingly proceeded on foot to their encampment, and on arrival found some eighty or more people. They were exceedingly disagreeable, and I received anything but a warm welcome. I asked them if they had stolen my goods. "No," they replied, "they are in the hut where you left them." I did not believe this, so inquired if they would return with me, but they emphatically refused to do so, informing me very decidedly that they wanted to have nothing more to do with me.

While I was pondering over the next step to take, three men were seen coming from the west. With no particular object in view I went out to meet them, and to my surprise I found that they were men well known to me, whom I had met on previous journeys. We sat down on the ground where we met, and passed round the pipe after Indian custom. They informed me that they were going to Concepcion with ostrich feathers to trade, and that they had passed my late

village. When I inquired about my goods, they assured me that they were quite safe there. Encouraged by this, I asked them if they would return with me to the settlement, offering them some things which I had at the river in exchange for their feathers. I was delighted to find that they were willing to accede to my request.

We then joined the other party in their encampment some few hundred yards away. Soon everyone was talking, but I could not follow their rapid conversation and angry altercations. There was evidently serious discord among my former friends. In a short time, the sub-chief, Pinse-ăpawa, informed me that he and some of his people, together with the three visitors, had decided to return with me to the village which they had recently abandoned, and before long we were on our way inland. That night, when we were encamped, the party became quite cheerful and friendly. Pinse-ăpawa told me not to trouble about the chief, Thlamosămap, who had been entirely to blame for deserting the village inland, and for refusing to return with me, as after all he was a person of no consequence. He had become a chief because he had engaged in war with the Paraguayans, in which he had lost an eye, but he had no history behind him. "But," said Pinse-ăpawa proudly, "my father was a chief, my grandfather was a chief, and I am now going to be your friend." Then turning to the oldest visitor, Yokseyi-wanyam, he said: "You are a relative of mine, and a great chief; you must speak with Yaho-yispuk, the war-chief in the West, and then all the Mascovy will be this man's friends, and no one will harm him."

Next day we arrived at the village, and found my goods safe in the place where I had left them. Here I spent three months, and not long after my arrival Thlamosămap and his people, with two chiefs from north of the River Verde, came and joined our party, swelling our numbers to over one hundred and fifty. Hunting, fishing, wrestling, and feasts

occupied most of our time, giving me an opportunity to acquire more of the language and to get on thoroughly intimate terms with the people.

Nothing of note occurred during these three months, with the exception of an attempt to poison me, and the stealing of my food by Thlamosămap, who laid the blame on a dog, and was promptly accused by his own son of being himself the culprit. But the burning of my hut, together with all my belongings, caused me the most inconvenience, for I was reduced to the unpleasant necessity of dressing in simple Indian garb for over a month, which won me the name of "Tăthnawu-lamum" ("The man who looked well, decked with beads")—a name which I still bear in that district.

In the course of my travels round the country, I had been on the lookout for a new spot on which to settle, and had been attracted by a site on a branch of the River Verde, called Thlagnasinkinmith, or "The place of many wood-ticks," and I unfortunately found it fully deserved its name. It was, nevertheless, a good place for a large settlement and a strategic position from which to reach the Sanapana Indians. I had long discussions with the people, and eventually we agreed to move thither.

With the prospect of a permanent settlement before me, I found it necessary to send to Concepcion for supplies. Of furniture I had none: my bed was the floor of my hut, my table a pigskin stretched tightly over four palm-posts. Such belongings as I could I hung from the roof; the rest lay in a corner. For my food I had to depend chiefly upon local resources. This kind of life did not agree with me, and my health soon began to suffer; everything seemed repugnant, and I could not bring myself to eat sufficient to nourish my body. The result was that I nearly fainted on several occasions.

Up to this time all my supplies had been carried by Indians from Concepcion, either on foot or on their horses; but I was



BULLOCK CARTS CROSSING A FLOODED STREAM

This is a difficult and frequently a risky operation.



A TEMPORARY HALT IN A CHACO FOREST







now anxious to try the experiment of taking a bullock-cart into the interior. I had no experience of bullock transport, neither had any of my Indian friends. My route lay through swamps, forests, and ant-hill plains, and a track had to be cut for the whole distance of some thirty-three miles. Paraguayans and others on the river-bank advised me not to try the experiment, which they assured me was impracticable; but something of the kind had to be attempted, or the work would have been crippled. I accordingly bought a cart and bullocks, and after many difficulties my Indians and I landed the first load at Thlagnasinkinmith.

I had become so far established when I received notice from the Society that the Ven. Archdeacon Shimield, Bishop Stirling's commissary, proposed visiting me, to inquire into the prospects of the work. Unfortunately the weather broke at the time of his arrival. Heavy rains made the track almost impassable, and his brief stay with me proved miserable in the extreme. He was fortunate, however, in seeing some four hundred and fifty Indians who had gathered at the station, and organized a feast in his honour. He seemed well satisfied, and considered the prospects very hopeful.

Following upon his favourable report, reinforcements were sent me from England, Andrew Pride and another joining me at Thlagnasinkinmith. The time was now ripe for establishing ourselves farther in the interior, and a settlement was formed about sixty miles west of Thlagnasinkinmith, at a place called Thlagwākhe, where Pride was eventually stationed.

On my return from the interior to Thlagnasinkinmith, I had occasion severely to censure the Indians. My anger had the usual effect upon them—they deserted me *en bloc*. I have often experienced the dreadful loneliness of that tropical and wilderness land, but I shall never forget this experience of ten days' solitude in my log-hut at Thlagnasinkinmith. No Indians were near, to my knowledge, and circumstances were such that I had to remain there. The first four days were

bearable, but on the fifth day I began to feel the nervous strain. The wild scene around me, and the strange stillness so peculiar to the tropics, broken only by the weird sounds of insect and animal life, so worked upon my nerves that I imagined all the beasts of the forest were congregating nightly round my hut. The nearest human being, as far as I knew, was quite thirty miles off, and I had not even a dog as a companion. Dangers can be faced, and, in fact, serve as a tonic; but to be alone in the wilds, entirely cut off from all human help, must be experienced to be fully appreciated.

Relief eventually came in the shape of the arrival of a small party of Indians, and I at once endeavoured to carry out my plan of partially abandoning Thlagnasinkinmith as a station for the more central site at Thlagwākhe. The removal of our property so far into the interior was a serious problem, especially as my Indians were sulky, and could not be relied upon to help me with the bullock-cart. A journey of sixty miles lay before me, rivers and swamps had to be crossed, and a track cut through forests. My position was a difficult one, but there was no alternative but to make the attempt single-handed. The Indian despises weakness, but will always follow the successful man.

The first difficulty that presented itself was the crossing of the River Verde, which was then in flood, forming a broad and deep stream. The bullock-cart was made of heavy timber, which could not be floated without the aid of a number of palm-logs lashed under the cart, but this was too great an undertaking to contemplate with my small party of two old and sulky men and one boy, who might have left me at any moment, and I had no wish to experience another period of solitude. I therefore proceeded to run the cart down the bank into the river. I then unloosed the body from the axle-bar, and carefully judging the balance, I got an old dug-out canoe, made from the bottle-trunk tree, in position underneath, and slowly paddling away with my

unwieldy burden, I left the wheels behind. With great difficulty I managed to get across, the Indians meanwhile sitting on the bank looking on. I steered my load between two upright tree-stumps, across which I lashed a palm-log. My object in so doing was to work the pole-shaft on to the bank so that the tail of the cart would rest on the horizontal palm-log. This accomplished, it was an easy matter to slip the canoe from underneath by depressing it. I then returned for the wheels, and by pushing the canoe underneath the axle-bar, I was enabled to get the balance with one wheel on each side, and rolling these into the water until the canoe floated with them, I ferried them across and got them into position underneath the cart. Then, by knocking away the cross-beam, the cart fell into place and was secured.

It was a comparatively easy matter to swim the bullocks across, and by means of a rope hawser attached to the pole-shaft, they pulled the cart up the bank. Indian-like, when all the hardest work was done, my companions came to my assistance in recrossing the bullocks to their enclosure, rafting the goods to the other side, overhauling the cart, loading up and yoking in. Four days had already passed, and a journey fraught with many difficulties was still before us. The track was so heavy that the bullocks could only be worked for six hours a day, but while they were resting and feeding, we had to go on ahead to select and clear a route through forests and swamps, often having to fell palms to make log-paving over spongy places, returning each night to our camp. Three times the cart had to be unloaded in order to cross deep gullies, but after seven days of hardship and difficulty, not to mention one old man being ill with fever for most of the journey, we reached Thlagwākhe. But although we were all inexperienced, this, the first bullock-cart journey into the interior of the Paraguayan Chaco, taught us many useful lessons for the future.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORY VERSUS PRACTICE

It is wonderful how much people enjoy giving advice to others, and how complacently they lay down rules of action to be followed by a man in a strange and peculiar position, without having the least knowledge of his circumstances. We often meet with kindly intentioned people who, with a smile of, as it were, superior intelligence, say, "Why do you not do this?" or "If I were you I would do that," although their knowledge of our local conditions is most inaccurate. A staunch old friend of missions wrote to me many years ago, when I was in the Falkland Islands, saying: "I suppose you often cross over in a boat to visit and ponder by the side of the grave of Captain Allen Gardiner?"\* The dear old lady little realized that such a visit entailed a journey of four hundred miles across one of the stormiest seas in the world. When I was in the Paraguayan Chaco an educated gentleman interested in the mission wrote urging me to cross over to the Purus River to see if anything remained of the old mission among the Aipurini. He evidently did not grasp the fact that the distance to be covered was fully fourteen hundred miles as the crow flies, for the most part through an unexplored region, a journey which, if it could have been accomplished, would have taken me probably a year. Many other such instances as these could be quoted, and although our

\* The founder of the S.A.M.S., who died of starvation whilst pioneering in Tierra del Fuego.

friends mean well, it requires no little patience and good-humour to bear with such counsellors.

Much of the advice kindly offered to us is, although good in theory, either quite impracticable, or so self-evident to the meanest understanding, that it is quite superfluous. Not long ago I received from a friend a little booklet of instructions to those travelling in the tropics. Among other things, we were warned to be careful to arrange our nets in such a way as to prevent the entrance of mosquitoes. There are many parts of the world where these insects are so few that the not over-sensitive traveller might become habitually careless, but in the Paraguayan Chaco one night's experience of these stinging malarial pests would teach him a lesson which would serve him once and for all. In my younger days, when on my way to the Chaco, many interested persons warned me to guard against the numerous fatal diseases supposed to be rampant in that reputed "pestiferous" region, which certainly was not calculated to encourage me.

Shortly after my arrival I accidentally came across a paper of instructions to the mission staff, among which directions as to the situation of a graveyard were laid down, and this, following so closely upon the previous warnings, did not tend to brighten the prospect before me. I had gone there to work, not to die. Death or martyrdom I looked upon as a possible accident of war, but certainly not an event to be brooded over. Surely the question of a graveyard, where only two or three were concerned, and in a country where space was of no consequence, was not one to be troubled about, especially as, in the event of death while travelling to and fro in this land, we should have had to leave the disposal of our remains to the judgment and inclination of the savages.

I quite agree that the question of the missionaries' health is a most important item. The danger of drinking bad



water is specially emphasized. I have never yet met anyone who has evinced the least desire to drink bad water; but water must be drunk, and if good is not obtainable, he must be content with bad. We are told to carry a pocket filter; we have done so, but found that in most cases the water would not pass through it, being far too muddy. "Boil the water." We do, when it is at all possible and necessary; but after travelling for hours in the hot tropical sun human weakness is such that we cannot always wait to do so when suffering from a burning thirst. We have often had to drink water in which dead fish and other matter were floating. "Boil this water!" Yes; but if there is a large party it is impossible to carry a sufficient number of suitable vessels, and the circumstances may be such that delay would be inadvisable. Although water in the Chaco is seldom appetizing, yet from the nature of the country, and the freedom from sources of infection, the drinking of apparently bad water is not nearly so serious as it might seem. In time of flood we had more than enough, but we have frequently been so pressed in time of drought as to be unable to wash for days together, content enough when we could secure sufficient of the dirty liquid for drinking purposes.

During the first years of our sojourn among the Indians, we were forced to move from place to place. We did not feel that we could trust them much as far as honesty was concerned, nor were we ever free from the danger of being abandoned by them in some remote and awkward position. We were therefore forced to carry about with us the minimum of stores and equipment, so as never to place ourselves in a position from which we could not single-handed extricate ourselves—living and travelling with a people who possessed no habitations that could be properly so called, and during the rainy seasons journeying for months in a flooded country, continually exposed to the injurious effects of the hot sun



by day and a chill damp by night, with our clothes wet and dirty, and very seldom with a comfortable sleeping-place. In addition to all these discomforts, we were the victims of the many insect pests, and often suffered from rheumatism and fever. It was suggested that we ought to have carried tents, camp-beds, and other paraphernalia for our comfort under such conditions. With trained Indians to look after such things, and to relieve us of all personal worry, and amid perfect security, as far as the people are concerned, such luxuries may be indulged in, although even now they impede mobility, and are in many respects an encumbrance. But in the early days when the solitary missionary had to depend upon himself, without any capable servants to work for him, living as he did under untried conditions, and in doubt day by day as to what might happen, and what attitude the people might take towards him, he could not thus afford to burden himself. The transport of such an equipment requires pack-animals and men to tend them. The early pioneer could not secure Indians capable of managing them, nearly everything had to be superintended personally, and after a long day of hungry travel he felt in no humour to fatigue himself further for the sake of a little extra comfort.

At any time of the year a tent is a useless encumbrance in the Chaco. We never set out to make a long journey in the wet season, having plenty of work to do on the stations, and it would be unprofitable to itinerate under such conditions. A three months' journey can often be made without once meeting with rain, and in hot weather the tent is too stuffy, while during the midday rest the shade of a tree is far preferable. On cold, dry nights it is much more comfortable to camp round a fire, so that in practice the result is that the tent, although carried, is not used, as it entails considerable trouble in packing, erecting, and repacking. In the night a storm may suddenly break, and our tent would be blown

down by the first gust, and even if, as the storm approaches, we decided to pitch it, we should all be wet before this could be accomplished. The formation of the country is such that it is difficult to find a suitable encampment to avoid the tent being swamped by the heavy rainfall, a fall of 6 inches in one night being not an unusual occurrence. In selecting a camp, many things have to be considered—the proximity of water, grass for the horses, and the supply of firewood, and it is not always possible to find a satisfactory site for a tent in juxtaposition to these necessities.

The missionary must be prepared to ignore inconveniences, discomforts and hardships, holding himself ready to move without the least delay in order that he may be able to take advantage of any opportunity that may offer in the prosecution of his work. Experience has taught him that the more elaborate the preparations made for taking a journey in this country, the less likely is it that the undertaking will be accomplished, as something is sure to occur before the preparations are complete to prevent it being carried out.

## CHAPTER V

### A MISSIONARY'S ATTRIBUTES

THE life of a missionary in the Paraguayan Chaco neither has been, nor is even now, an altogether ideal one. The hardship and difficulty entailed is calculated to sap the physical and nervous force; yet it has many bright features, and possesses a peculiar charm of its own. He is not tied down by conventionalities as at home, and is free from the dictates of fashion and many of the irksome customs of the homeland. He can travel or camp where he pleases, not restricted by walls and hedges, property rights and trespass notices. He has no troublesome tax-gatherers, nor is he subject to numberless bye-laws and regulations; he is not continually being harassed with recourse to the law courts.

To anyone who can enjoy a simple outdoor life and appreciate the things of nature, self-contained enough to endure long periods of loneliness, but at the same time capable of indulging in a laugh and seeing the humorous side of things, life among the Indians is by no means a monotonous one. But to anyone whose idea of life is to live in a crowd, and to be constantly in a whirl of excitement and frivolity, the wilderness is no place for him.

In spite of many adversities, he soon learns to take troubles lightly. After a miserable night, for example, of cold, wet, and hunger, he soon revives under the hot sun, which cheers him and dries his wet and bedraggled garments. The missionary or other traveller, to be a success in such a land as

this, must be cheerful, patient and enduring, able to turn his hand to anything, and quick-witted enough to overcome any difficulty that besets his way.

There is undoubtedly much pleasure to be obtained in looking back over past experiences, and in recounting one's adventures, trials, and hardships, when seated in a comfortable arm-chair by a cosy English fireside; but when actually undergoing these experiences it is hard to see anything pleasurable in them. It would be foolish, however, to brood and grumble over our discomforts and misfortunes. The wise course is to try and see the bright side, and even under the worst conditions there is not lacking some redeeming feature. I remember, when exploring the Monte Lindo River in a steam-launch in company with an old surveyor, meeting with many trying experiences. It was midsummer, and the heat was intense, and we felt it the more because we were cut off by the high forest-clad banks from the little breeze that was blowing. From 3 a.m. till 9 p.m. we steamed ahead, sometimes stopping to cut firewood, or having to jump into the stream and, with axe in hand, cut away some obstacle formed by drifting logs and weeds. Our crew of ex-soldiers, supplied by the Government officials, became mutinous, and we had to resort to threats in order to keep them in check. We were in such a position that we could not get ashore, and in our cramped quarters our patience was sorely tried by the clouds of mosquitoes. To crown all, about midnight a violent storm burst upon us, and we were soon wet through and shivering with the cold. This was more than I could bear, and my patience gave way. I began to complain at our hard lot, but the old surveyor simply smiled and said: "You will yet encounter worse than this; and, after all, we are not so badly off." Yes, it might have been worse. I had been in worse plights before, and was destined to experience hundreds more. Thus did the old surveyor, some sixty years of age, teach a

lesson of patience and endurance to the young missionary of twenty-six.

It is well that people should know the conditions of life in such a barbarous land as the Chaco, and should understand that missionaries are not carpet-knights, leading lives of ease and refinement; at the same time, missionaries do not claim that they are the only beings who are called upon to face hardship. Scientific men, traders, and others, either for the love of their work, the desire for honour, or for gain, endure every day equally as much as we do. The missionary is not a superman; he is just an ordinary man, trying to do what he feels is his duty. His aim is not to gain wealth, honour, or name, or to gratify himself, and if he gets little from this world he has nothing to complain of; by his own openly affirmed faith he seeks not the favour of this world, but only the approval of his Master.

Although the general characteristics necessary to qualify a man to lead such a life as this are by no means peculiar to the missionary, yet certain moral and spiritual attributes are specially necessary in his case. First and foremost, he who would successfully evangelize a savage race, must be in full sympathetic touch with the people, and must endeavour to see things equally from their point of view as from his own. One very necessary step towards this is for him to get rid as soon as possible of his narrow, conservative, and self-satisfied insular ideas. His object is to win men for Christ, and not to make them Englishmen. There are many of our virtues and qualities which it would be well for the missionary to induce his converts to acquire, but there is no doubt that, heathen and debased though a savage may be, he has qualities and virtues peculiar to himself which are well worth preserving.

On the question of dress the Englishman is apt to be exacting, and to consider that savages, when once converted



to Christianity, should adopt European attire. Their half-dressed condition strikes him as verging on the immoral, whereas he forgets that it has no such effect upon them, and that calling attention to the matter, instead of improving the case, suggests evil to their minds. It is true that an English person in dressing thus scantily would be deserving of blame, as it would be taken to indicate a lack of modesty, but with the Indian it is quite different, and "Honi soit qui mal y pense," the clothes do not make a Christian. The converted barbarian can serve Christ, and lead a pure life quite well without the extensive drapery of the Britisher.

The English nation is the most rigid of all in the observance of Sunday, and in such she is right, but it must not be forgotten that the Englishman has ample opportunities for spending it profitably, pleasantly, and comfortably. He is apt to try and force the converted savage to observe it as strictly as himself, forgetting that their conditions are quite different. The convert from heathenism is not always able to read, and if he is, he has no selection of suitable books to study. It is difficult to imagine him in a position to teach in a Sunday-school, visit the sick and needy, or engage in spiritual work for the benefit of his fellows; only the few most advanced ones could ever enjoy these privileges. In the main they are still in the stage of pupilage, and can only spend their time in attending services for their own benefit. The Englishman has been accustomed to such regular services for generations, and it is difficult for him to realize that the untrained savage recently converted, is not mentally qualified to either enjoy, or benefit by, an over-tedious amount of religious exercise. Informal conversation with them in their villages on profitable topics does not subject them to the same mental strain, and being more in keeping with their disposition and habits, often accomplishes more good than more formal efforts to elevate them.



The Englishman has his food secured, and frequently fares better on the day of rest and worship than on any other day, but the Indian is not so circumstanced, and if the result of the Saturday hunt has been unsuccessful, he would have to spend a cheerless, empty Sunday, unless he devoted a few hours of that day to gathering roots or getting fish. Would the Englishman, with nothing to eat, enjoy his morning service, to say nothing of the evening one? Our Lord had compassion on the multitudes, knowing they were an hungered, and it behoves us not to be pharisaical, and lay more burdens than they can bear on the shoulders of these recently won children of nature. In brief, our attitude should be not to destroy an indifferent house until we can provide a better, and not to spoil a good work by overstraining things.

## CHAPTER VI

### A WANDERER

THERE is something peculiarly attractive in reading the lives of explorers, pioneers of settlements, shipwrecked sailors and missionaries ; and although adventures generally spell hardship, yet they possess a certain charm even for those who experience them. I must confess that, in looking back upon the past, I regard my earliest years in the Chaco as among some of the happiest of my life, in spite of the privations, dangers, and constant nervous strain to which I was subjected. There is a sense of freedom and novelty in such a life, which people who are in constant touch with civilization cannot possibly understand or appreciate. The realization that one is in the land of mystery, alone, and has been the first of his race to tread some of these wilds, the first to come into contact with and understand a hitherto unknown people, that any day something entirely new may be discovered, has a peculiar satisfaction of its own.

It is difficult, after the lapse of so many years, to write with freshness on the primitive and roaming life which I led, for it has long since lost its novelty, and has in fact become commonplace ; but some of the features of my early experiences may serve to throw some light on the everyday life of a pioneer in the wilds.

Attaching myself first to one clan and then to another, I went from village to village, wandering about with the Indian nomads on their hunting expeditions, and making

myself one of them in their primitive existence, trying and revolting as it often was. Yet it was only by such means that their language could be acquired, and a proper study made of their characteristics and habits of life.

I sometimes joined a party of sixty or more Indians, and would spend a fortnight in making a journey which could have been done in four days. But we had to hunt by the way in order to provide the necessaries of life. On these occasions we had no permanent shelter, camping during the midday heat under a shady tree, and at night sleeping on the ground with only the clear starlit tropical sky above. On moonlight nights the camp was given up to wrestling competitions, dancing, and singing, but we were in a miserable plight when the frequent thunder-storms burst upon us in our unprotected condition. On these journeys we rarely broke our fast until evening, when the hunters returned with their day's takings; and although I generally had a small stock of provisions with me, not being able to eat much of the almost repulsive food which my companions seemed to enjoy, yet when provisions were short, I could not bring myself to sit down in lonely state and eat when others were hungry. On the other hand, had I shared my limited stock, it would not have sufficed us for a day.

My food was not by any means choice. For bread I had to use the refuse of the mandioca plant, after the bulk of the starch had been extracted, and called by the Indians "săppăpnik," which signifies "the flour of the mandioca," but there was very little flour about it; to me it more resembled a whitish-coloured sawdust. It was usually eaten in the form of cakes, and the method of preparing them was to take a few handfuls of the so-called "flour," place it on a pigskin, and moisten it with water, then, pressing it together in the hands, flatten it out into a cake, and, brushing the ashes aside, bake it on the hot clay beneath. Indians and

Paraguayans could eat a good quantity of this bread with seeming relish, but for me, although often very hungry, a little was sufficient.

My invariable beverage was tea, of which I took the utmost care not to run short, but I have often been reduced to the necessity of carefully drying the leaves in the sun after a brew. I always carried a small quantity of soda as a remedy against the inevitable acidity which followed my meals, and a pinch of this came in useful to extract the little remaining flavour and colour from the leaves. I had to prepare my tea in a somewhat crude manner. The leaves were dropped into a kettle full of very dirty and not always sweet-smelling water, when it came to the boil. A kettle was not always procurable; all sorts of vessels—frying-pans, three-legged iron pots, and old tins—have had to serve for kettle and teapot combined. Occasionally I had to fall back on the earthenware pot of the Indians, which needed careful cleaning beforehand, as it was generally used for the boiling of fish or water-snake.

Mandioca and tea formed my early breakfast, but meals were irregular in those days, and were partaken of without any regard to hour or necessity, being wisely taken when opportunity occurred and something was ready to hand, as it was never certain what a day might bring forth.

It was a luxury to obtain a few ostrich eggs. One would be considered sufficient to provide an omelet for several people, but I have frequently consumed one by myself, nor let it be thought extraordinary, since nothing else accompanied it, and a considerable interval had elapsed since the last meal.

I have enjoyed many a welcome repast sitting round a large clay pot, and dipping out of it in company with a number of natives. It would be well for any who may have the same privilege, or misfortune (whichever way it may be looked at), of joining in a native feast, and sharing the common pot, to



#### A NATIVE CLAY OVEN

The girls are holding newly-baked loaves. Indian women soon learn to bake excellent bread.





provide themselves with a large spoon, and not to be too slow in mastication, or they would come poorly off.

The question of food is a serious one in the Chaco, even water being so scarce during a time of drought that Europeans as well as the natives suffer terribly from thirst. The seasons are by no means regular; some years water is procurable anywhere, but exceptionally severe droughts are experienced, which have been known to last for over eighteen months. Nature does her part towards minimizing these severities, which are fortunately not frequent. In most parts of the Eastern Chaco a plant known as the "caraguata" is found in the woods. This conserves rain-water and dew for a long period in the hollow axils of its leaves. An average plant will hold a pint, and owing to its prickly points, and hooked thorns, it is preserved from destruction, few animals being tempted to drink from it. Even human beings have to carefully guard against the thorns in procuring caraguata water, and the whole proceeding is a somewhat painful experience owing to the myriads of forest insects. After first cutting out the root, the leaves are stabbed with a knife, and the water caught in a pot or kettle. It is then strained through a bunch of grass or the crown of a hat, to intercept dead leaves, water-spiders, and other insects.

In all parts of the Chaco, but more especially in the northwest, the ground water-melon is found, which sometimes attains to a great size. A melon of the dimensions of a thirty-gallon pot would be by no means exceptional. The plant is not easily noticed except by the trained eye, as all that is visible are a few withered-looking stalks with scarcely any leaves, which would never arrest the attention of the casual observer. It is most valuable in the dry season, as the Indians depend upon it, not only for their own supply, but for the maintenance of their animals. It is composed of a spongy substance, like the ordinary water-melon, and I have

often been thankful for the not over-attractive whitish juice which is obtained by squeezing it.

Under pressure of thirst the suffering traveller soon loses all fastidiousness, and only those who have experienced what real thirst is can understand how it is possible for an ordinary individual to bring himself not only to partake of, but even to enjoy what would be scorned by the dweller in more favoured regions. After travelling for many hours under the burning sun, I frequently sat down with my companions, and enjoyed a welcome drink of filthy liquid found in the hollows made by the hoofs of a passing bullock, in which rain-water had collected. It is well known that horses are particular animals in their drinking, but we have often partaken of a green, brackish slime which our animals refused to touch.

One of the many peculiarities of life in the Chaco is the strange contrasts so frequently experienced. A prolonged drought is usually followed by a period of heavy rains, and the effect of a sudden storm on the dry waste plains is almost incredible. A fall of from 6 to 8 inches of rain in one night is not infrequent, which speedily converts large areas of parched ground into swamp. The hitherto hot and thirsty traveller now shivers with the cold, and finds himself faced with the many difficulties of too great a water-supply. Many precautions have to be taken when camping for the night, and even when every possible preparation has been made the discomforts are numerous. One of my experiences will suffice to describe how the traveller fares under such conditions. On this particular occasion my companions and I had camped in an open stretch of grass country, and fearing a storm, we chose a site alongside a fallen tree-trunk, knowing that it would come in useful in case of a heavy rainfall.

About 11 p.m., when we had been asleep barely two hours, the storm broke over us, and as there was every indication that it would last through the night, we placed our baggage

on the log—the top of which was about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground—and made them as secure as possible. We were wet through at the first downpour, and our only comfort—the fire—was soon extinguished. We had to sit in complete darkness, shivering with the cold, and unable to see each other except by the flashes of lightning. To our horror we soon discovered that we had camped in an almost imperceptible hollow and that the water was rapidly rising. Before morning it was up to our knees, and when the dawn at last came we found that most of our goods were wet, and some of our provisions quite spoilt.

During the first lull the Indians went off in search of better quarters. Having found a little knoll covered with thick bushes, we at once moved our belongings there. This slight eminence was above any possible rise of water, and although the surface was wet and sloppy and only a few feet in area, yet it was as good a place as we could hope to find. We soon cleared a space under the bushes, and strewing the ground with twigs, we managed to get a fairly comfortable resting-place. Gathering grass, and packing it on top of the bushes, we made a tolerable shelter, not sufficient to keep off the rain, but enough to break its force.

We had hardly completed these preparations and brought our horses near, when the storm broke again; but by this time we had managed to light a fire by tearing down an abandoned nest of white ants built on to the trunk of a tree. This is composed of a dry and gummy cellular substance, sealed over with a tough outer covering, which makes the interior waterproof, and by scraping this out with a knife we obtained a supply of suitable material for lighting a fire when everything else was saturated with the rain.

After drinking some hot yerba-maté, or Paraguayan tea, and eating a few biscuits which had been reduced to a pulp by the rain, we wrapped ourselves in our wet blankets, and

went to sleep. About 3 p.m. the storm cleared somewhat, so we made some preparations for our comfort during the night by thatching our shelter afresh, laying in a supply of firewood, and drying our clothes. About sunset the storm gathered again, and did not cease until the morning. Although we were wet through, we passed a fairly comfortable night sitting round the fire, and having an occasional sip of hot yerba-maté, the cheering and sustaining properties of which are well known in South America.

On the morrow the sun shone out brightly, the sky was clear, and evidently the storm had subsided. We made a start at midday, but progress was slow, as the whole country had the appearance of a lake, and in some places the water was waist-deep. One result of this was that myriads of mosquitoes had developed, and our wet clothes clinging to our skin gave them a greater advantage over us. They settled in thick patches, and so great was their irritation that we had some difficulty in preventing our horses from lying down and rolling with us and our baggage. They were incessantly flicking themselves with their long, wet tails, with the result that we were wet from the waist down. Towards sunset the insect pests became even worse, our horses stirring them up in their progress through the long grass, and in addition to mosquitoes, we were badly bitten by horse-flies. It is almost impossible to adequately describe the enormity of Chaco insect life; it must be experienced to be thoroughly appreciated. At nightfall we reached a village, and found the people in a wretched and mud-bedraggled condition.

When speaking of an Indian village, the reader must not imagine it as a widespread collection of huts. Their settlements being only of a temporary nature, are nothing but flimsy booths constructed of tree-branches stuck in the ground, bent over and loosely thatched. Owing to the nomadic habits of the people, and the many reasons for

## SLEEPING UNDER DIFFICULTIES 57

suddenly abandoning their villages, such as the fear of evil spirits or an outbreak of disease, they usually make no attempt at building dwellings of a permanent and weather-proof nature; their dwellings are little more than rude shelters from the sun. The result is that during storms and flood-time their condition, half naked as they are, is wretched in the extreme.

In the early years, in order to assimilate myself more pronouncedly to them and their life, I shared these booths with them. In many ways this was a most unpleasant experience, especially at night. The abundance of insect life is by no means the most disturbing element, the presence of horses, sheep, goats, dogs, fowls, and other animals, which congregate at night in and around the village, being far more detrimental to sleep. The goats, which are especially sensitive to wet and cold, have no hesitation in invading the Indians' shelters, and I have often been rudely awakened by these intruders charging my mosquito-net, and even alighting on my body. An Indian has a superstitious aversion to killing a dog, with the result that on an average each family possesses at least three. These lie down with their owners, and are incessantly barking or fighting, and unless there are means of walling oneself off, one spends a great part of the night throwing missiles at them, an occupation which is general throughout the whole village.

The Indians themselves are responsible for many of the disturbances. Owing to their superstitious beliefs and fear of evil spirits they are given to bad dreams, in which they either see apparitions or feel their presence. The dreamer, on awaking, immediately begins to drone out a low, monotonous chant to the accompaniment of the rattle of a gourd, which he may keep up for quite an hour. This weird combination of sounds is calculated to scare away the ghost, but is at the same time not conducive to sleep. Throughout the whole



night someone is astir, either talking and smoking, cooking and eating a fish, getting water, or otherwise occupied.

During the daytime, when not engaged in hunting, I used to join the groups of men sitting round the fires, and shared with them the friendly pipe passed round from mouth to mouth. Sometimes I took part in their wrestling matches, or would practise with the bow and arrow; at others I would romp with the children and play the tiger, or join the boys in their aquatic games. As I became more at home with the people I made jokes with the women, and often had the whole village in laughter at my attempts to spin wool, or at my imitation of the women's dances. The secondary position which an Indian squaw has to take is not customary in the Chaco as it is among most tribes. The Lengua-Mascoy women are by no means despised or ill-treated; they are at a premium, and consequently exercise great influence. I therefore found it politic to take every opportunity of winning their regard and respect, and in this I succeeded so well that I received many attentions at their hands. One old woman, the wife of a chief, took a special interest in me. She would often bring me palm-cabbage or cactus fruit, expressing her anxiety at my thin condition. On one occasion she brought me a dainty dish in the form of the fat from the tail of a mud-fish—a most revolting-looking preparation—assuring me that it would have the effect of making me fatter. She was full of solicitude for me whenever I showed symptoms of illness, and once, on her own responsibility and initiative, she sent for two celebrated witch-doctors to attend me.

In the early days of the mission, when there was no other course open to us but to lead this wandering life, we found, after giving it a fair trial, that in spite of the many advantages it offered, they were dearly bought, and as time went on we began to realize that the only real way of consolidating the work was to form settled stations where we could systematically instruct the people.



## CHAPTER VII

### FOLKLORE

THE folklore and traditions of the Indian tribes are a most interesting subject, and, since the people possess no literature, form one of the chief sources from which their history can be gathered. But it is very difficult to extract what is of real importance from stories of a trivial character, as they vary considerably. The Indian is fond of entertaining his companions round the camp-fire, and is apt to make little additions of his own; there is nevertheless a vein of similarity running through the various accounts, and they prove exceedingly useful to us in bringing newer and higher truths to the Indians' notice. It is difficult to remember them all, gathered as they often are under circumstances that prevent the making of careful notes; but a short series of the most important may prove of some value to the reader who is interested in the subject of folklore.

To extract the full value from them they require to be carefully studied in connection with those of neighbouring and allied peoples; but to make a careful and thorough analysis of them would prove inappropriate to, and beyond the scope of, this work.

A long time ago there was a famous wizard whose powers exceeded those of all others of his calling; but he was a particularly evil man, and did great harm throughout the surrounding country. His tyranny and evil deeds at last

became so great that the people with one accord decided to kill him. In their attack upon him they wounded him severely, and threw him on a large fire which they had specially prepared; but he was proof against it, and came out alive. Again they attempted to destroy him, and cut him in pieces; but he joined himself together, and continued to plague them.

For the third time they consulted together, and concluded that the most likely means of accomplishing their object would be to starve him by depriving him of the power of digesting his food. They therefore cut out his stomach; but nothing daunted, he walked off into the woods, and there, on meeting a deer, said to it, "I have no stomach; I must kill you, and appropriate yours"; which he forthwith proceeded to do. He seemed to flourish with the deer's stomach as a substitute for his own, and the people, finding that they were quite unable to overcome him, had no alternative but to submit to his tyranny.

I am rather inclined to believe that this fable has some connection with their past history, but in what way I cannot even conjecture.

I remember hearing a somewhat similar story among the Yahgan Indians of Tierra del Fuego, of a man monster, who for a long time resisted all attempts to put an end to him, but was eventually overcome by a great hero named Tumurn.

In a certain Chaco river, a monster was supposed to live, who had the form of half-man and half-fish. He was held in great terror by the people, and few dared to approach the river. A woman one day unthinkingly went down to draw water, and met the fish-man, who fell in love with her, and asked her to become his wife. She, out of fear, consented, but begged leave to first return to the village with her water-jar. Her request was granted.

For a long time she was afraid to return to the river, but eventually she had to go, as there was no other water obtainable. As she was dipping in her jar, the fish-man again appeared, and was very angry with her for having deceived him. Seizing her by the hand, he insisted on taking her to his home beneath the water, and making her his wife. She, however, bit his hand, and, as he drew it away in pain, she ran off. In revenge he caused the water of the river to flood, with the result that nearly all her people were drowned.

One evening, when all the men had gone out hunting, and only the women were left in the village, two male visitors arrived, and made themselves very pleasant and agreeable, having much news to tell. As it was getting late, the women tried to persuade them to remain the night, informing them that their men would soon be back, but they refused the invitation, and hastened off just before the hunters returned. On hearing the news regarding these visitors, the men looked grave, and inquired the direction which they had taken. The women were astonished when they were told that they had not been men at all, but jaguars in the form of men, who had come to deceive and destroy them, and were assuredly lurking in the neighbourhood. This they were convinced of because they had seen the marks of their claws not far from the village. Their words turned out to be true, for on pursuing them with their bows and arrows, they came up with them and killed them.

The story is told of an Indian woman who fell in love with and married a jaguar, by whom she had two children. In appearance they were as men, but were gifted with the strength and fierceness of their father. An Indian who had wanted to marry her was full of jealousy, but he feared to attack the jaguar-husband. One day, however, he sought to revenge himself on her two children, and while she was absent

from the village, he killed them. When she returned and saw their bleeding bodies, she was filled with grief, and rushed away to the woods to find her husband. The village people were sitting that night around their fires congratulating themselves that at last the jaguar-children were killed, when suddenly the jaguar-father appeared, and accusing them of having killed his children and of leaving his wife childless, he rushed upon them and killed them all.

The Lengua-Mascoy assert that they sometimes hear people whispering in the woods, as a group of men might do who did not want to be discovered. Two Europeans of my acquaintance professed to have heard the same mysterious whispering, and I believe that others also have heard it. The Indians' interpretation of the phenomenon is that the whisperers are the souls of foreigners travelling in their dreams, and that they are making remarks about what they see. Strange sounds are certainly heard in the stillness of the night in the Chaco fastnesses, which although due to natural causes are often very suggestive of the supernatural.

Although cannibalism is not practised in the Chaco, the people have many stories about it, which may be only invented, or may be accounts which have reached them referring to some distant tribe. But it is quite possible that they are the result of a long-forgotten habit. These cannibals are supposed to be located in the far west, and in that direction, among a people of Guaraní descent, such practices were evidently in vogue.

One of their stories is as follows: Three venturesome Lenguas, curious to know what countries and people lay to the west of their own land, set out upon a long journey of discovery. They travelled by night and hid in the woods by day when passing through the countries of the hostile tribes. After some months of this journeying they accidentally met

two men, who greeted them in a very friendly manner. Although they could not understand each other's language, the Lenguas soon discovered that they would be welcome guests at the village of these men. In accordance with signs which were made to them, they followed them to their village. On nearing it, and before they could see it, they smelt a peculiarly sickly odour which surprised them greatly. On their arrival they were heartily welcomed by all, and were given food, some of which they had never tasted before, but which they found very palatable.

Although the people of the village seemed to be so friendly, there was a something about the place which made them feel uncomfortable and suspicious. They could not tell what it was, but they had a feeling of insecurity. Just after dark all the people—men, women, and children—left the village, the men to bring in the heaps of firewood which they had previously cut, and the women and children to fetch water from the river near by. The Lengua-Mascoy had previously noticed several large earthenware pots cooking on the fires, and feeling curious, they took this opportunity of being alone to examine the contents. Approaching one pot, to their horror they discovered the fingers of a human hand protruding from a mass of boiling meat, and stirring the contents with the end of their bows they saw a foot. In another pot, when turning over a large, round piece of meat, a human face was exposed. They were filled with horror, disgust, and terror, and fled immediately into the woods, making all haste to their homes.

Many other tales connected with cannibalism\* are told by

\* There is every reason to believe that cannibalism was at one time practised among the Chiriguano Indians bordering the Chaco, but I can almost say with certainty that no such thing was ever practised by the Chaco peoples proper. The Chiriguanos are well known, and always have been, to the Chaco tribes.



the Lengua-Mascoy, but they look upon the custom with loathing and disgust.

At a place called Yithwase-yamilkyit, about one hundred and sixty miles west of the River Paraguay, the natives have a story about a naked woman covered all over the body with rough hair. She is supposed to live in the forests, but to be in the habit of approaching villages at night for the purpose of stealing. When pursued, she vanishes from sight in some mysterious way, so that none have ever been able to come close to her. She does not seem to be in any way dangerous, and the Indians do not evince much fear of her.

There may be more in this story than appears on the surface. Yithwase-yamilkyit is, according to Indian history, the most eastern point formerly reached by the Lengua-Mascoy tribe, and they have a distinct memory of the peoples who lived between that place and the River Paraguay. They appear to have conquered these peoples, and to have partially exterminated them. As a natural consequence the victors looked down upon the vanquished, and frequently referred to them as devils. They would never admit that there had been any intermarriage between them, but everything points to the fact that such had taken place, and it is probable that the story of the naked and hairy woman originated in the natural instinct possessed by the Indian to disparage and ridicule those whom they consider their inferiors.

Among the Fuegians a similar habit was in vogue. One tribe would accuse another of revolting practices. It is probable that Darwin, who derived some of his information from anything but dependable sources, such as the historical Jemmy Button, was thus deceived into believing that what these Indians told him was true. A case in point is the story told him that some of the Fuegians, when pressed by hunger, were in the habit of killing their old women.\*

\* "Journal of Researches," chap. x., p. 214.

There is a widespread belief among the Lengua-Mascoy in the existence of a tribe whose knee-joints are reversed, so that their legs appear as those of the rhea; and to make the similitude more complete, they are supposed to possess only three toes, but these of great length. They live in the forests, and are reputed to be exceedingly swift of foot. They are not warriors, and are despised by the other tribes. It is said that it is impossible to kill them, for the simple reason that no one can get near enough to them, as they disappear into the forests with such rapidity. They have neither houses nor gardens, but wander about continually in search of roots and wild fruit, resting wherever night may find them.

They are located by the Lengua-Mascoy in the interior of the Chaco, somewhere between  $20^{\circ}$  and  $21^{\circ}$  south latitude. The story varies somewhat among the different tribes. The Matacos, for example, told me that their timidity and fleetness was well known, but that their legs and feet were the same as those of other men; with this difference, that feathers grew naturally on the knee. While travelling in Bolivia, I was told by the Chiriguanos that they were exactly like other men in physique, but that their fleetness exceeds even that of a horse. They deem them dangerous, locate them in the forest just as the other tribes do, and assert that they have neither dwellings nor plantations, but that, being continually afraid of enemies, they sleep and rest in a kneeling posture. Hence their knees become abnormally developed and horny.

It is quite possible that there does exist a small tribe of indigenous people, who have been so harassed and partly exterminated by invading tribes, that their only safety is in the obscurities of the forest, and that long practice has made them expert in quickly hiding themselves.

These different accounts are, again, quite in keeping with the Indian habit of ridiculing those whom they despise, and

of circulating stories about them in order to make them despicable in the eyes of others.

There are many stories about a race of dwarfs supposed to exist in some ill-defined region in the north, but not in the Chaco. Many reports have reached me of such a people from outside sources, and it is not improbable that a race may exist, similar to the pigmies in Central Africa.

In the large forests of the Chaco, about  $21^{\circ}$  south latitude, there are Indians apparently akin to the Lengua-Mascoy, who are supposed to have peculiar customs, the chief of which is their apparently inhospitable manner of receiving visitors. It is said that as soon as travellers are seen approaching, men and women turn out armed with great clubs, and, beating upon the ground savagely, they cry out, "Here come travellers, let us kill them!" But immediately afterwards, curiously enough, they receive their visitors with warm friendship, and treat them well. It is hard to say whether this account is fact or fancy, and for this reason I have included it here.

There is an interesting story told of how the Towothli and Aii tribes lost their languages. They now inhabit a country between the Tropic of Capricorn and  $24^{\circ}$  to  $25^{\circ}$  south, and  $58^{\circ}$  to  $61^{\circ}$  west longitude, but say that originally they came from the north-west, and spoke a language similar to that now spoken by the Kilyäkmuk Indians—a people lying only two days' ride north-north-west of the mission-station at Mäkthlawaiya, and closely akin to the Lengua-Mascoy.

The Towothli are said to have migrated south for some reason or other, and, falling upon bad times, were reduced to great hunger. One day one of their witch-doctors, perceiving a rainbow in the south-west, and not knowing what it was, thought it might be something good to eat. The

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tribe moved on towards it, and eventually came up with it. They ate a portion of it, and immediately their language became confused, and thereafter they spoke a distinct language from the Lengua-Mascoy.

The Aii originally lived in the same country as the Towothli, and spoke the same language, but they also moved southward, and discovered the lolach (*Lepidosiren*) in the swamps which abound in that region. Of this they ate freely, and shortly afterwards they too lost their language and spoke another.

There is no doubt that these traditions point to a common origin of the Lengua-Mascoy, Towothli, and Aii, and probably they, the Suhin, and it may be the Tobas also, were at one time one people. A similarity of customs and ideas, as also of characteristics, seems to support this, and apparently there is little doubt but that they all came from the upper reaches of the River Pilcomayo, probably not more than eight or nine hundred years ago. The lolach is found in the swampy regions of the Chaco, and some clans even get their name from it. The fact also of their losing their original language is easily explained by their intermixture with an indigenous race whose lands they conquered. The peoples just mentioned, especially the first two, always regard themselves as more or less brothers, and ever since I have been in the country they have been on more or less friendly terms.

Long ago the Indians are said to have lived happily in their own wild and barbarous way. A nomadic party camped for a time on the edge of a great forest. The men went hunting, and the women searched for fruit and roots. One woman, wandering off by herself, chanced one day in the forest to discover a beautiful tree. It entranced her; she could not help looking upon it. She could not tear her-

self away from it. She at last embraced the trunk, and as dusk fell she reluctantly returned to her encampment. Day by day she sought it out and adored it. But one day it changed into a man, and there is reason to believe that she fell into serious trouble.

A long time ago a witch-doctor hung up in his hut a marvellous gourd, called a "pucu," and warned his people that they were on no account to touch it or look into it. One day an old woman, full of the curiosity of her sex, after long resisting the temptation, tried to reach it in order to see its contents, but, stumbling against it, it tipped over, and she and most of her people were drowned by the flood of waters which issued from it.

There is a story told of a great snake which lives in the forests, and is reputed to be of tremendous size and length, being able to rear its head some six feet from the ground.

Not long ago I passed through a forest in which the Indians told me this fabulous monster had a few years ago been seen. The path which they formerly travelled lay a little to the east; having been abandoned, it had become overgrown, and they had been forced to seek a new way through for fear of encountering the monster. From time to time an Indian is heard of who has caught a glimpse of this terrible creature. For a while it causes a great sensation, only to die down and be revived some few years afterwards, like the tale of the sea-serpent.

There is some connection between this serpent and the rainbow. Indians I have met have told me that in the far-distant ages the rainbow was really a serpent which rose up out of some great water towards the sky.

On the banks of the River Monte Lindo it is asserted that a great snake once lived, which left a trail much wider than



an Indian track. It was possessed of a huge head and tusks, and some say they have seen remains of such monsters.

Gigantic bones of extinct animals have been found in this neighbourhood, possibly of the megatherium and glyptodon. As the Indians do not know anything about such creatures, it is not unnatural that they conceived them to be those of some great reptile, and believed it possible that such creatures might be encountered alive.

Stories have been periodically told us of the existence of a huge and deadly serpent dwelling in the forests, either along the banks of the Rio Verde to the north, or near the Rio Monte Lindo in the south. Bones of deer and other big animals have been discovered in the forest, and leading from the spot to the water a broad, serpentine track, such as would be produced by the slow movement of an enormous reptile. Only one story, however, has been told us of such a monster being actually seen by man, which I will narrate more or less in the Indian's own words.

“One day I went down south to hunt. It was very early in the morning when I started, and I was hungry. The dew was heavy, and there was much water in the swamps and low-lying plains. It was cold, and I was shivering. At last I came upon a higher plain where tall grass was growing. The sun was now up, and I was keenly alert. I expected to see a deer, wild pig, or perhaps an ostrich. Soon my eyes were attracted to recent trampling of the grass, which on closer examination proved to be the tracks of wild pigs. I determined to follow them, and was soon rewarded for my trouble by discerning in the distance a herd of pigs, feeding in a glade where they could be easily stalked. I climbed a tree, and discovered that I could get within shooting distance without being observed.

“Running with bow strung and arrows ready, I reached the spot. Immediately in front of the pigs was a narrow opening leading into a clear space, beyond which was the

river. A large tree stood at either side of the opening. While endeavouring to get as near as possible to my quarry, I suddenly caught sight of a jaguar in one of the trees, waiting for the pigs to come up to the spot. Perplexed in mind whether to shoot a pig or the jaguar, I hesitated for a few moments and looked round. To my astonishment, I saw in the opposite tree the coils of a huge serpent, apparently also waiting for the coming of the pigs. Every moment they were getting nearer to their enemies. A little bird chirped a warning to the pigs, who gazed round, wondering at the cause. Instantly the jaguar pounced upon a pig, while from the other tree the serpent swiftly glided down, and wound its sinuous form around the jaguar. A battle-royal followed. The pig squeaked, the tiger growled, the serpent hissed. Tighter and tighter the reptile enfolded its victim, which savagely clawed the dark body twisted round him. The herd of pigs had fled, and pursuit was useless. I waited to see the end of the struggle. The pig was evidently crushed to death, the groans of the jaguar grew weaker, and the serpent's hiss more feeble. Fearing to go too near, I thought it well to fire a few arrows into the bodies, which did not move. I eventually approached and found the pig dead, the jaguar dead, and the serpent dead. Thus I had to content myself with a crushed pig and the jaguar's hide."

There is a story told of how the little woodpecker, "Yăkwăte-ămaak" ("Short-bill"), received honour among birds. Some of them had discovered honey in the hollow of a tree, but it was exceedingly difficult of access because of the hardness of the wood. The toucan and a few other long-beaked birds claimed to have tasted the honey, and pronounced their opinion as to its excellent quality, but they had failed in their attempts to reach the whole bulk, and longed for more.

The news travelled round the bird-world, and at a conference it was agreed that the bird possessing the sharpest "tawa" (axe—a poetic term for "bill"), which should succeed in penetrating the tree, should be elected the king of birds. The competitors gathered round the tree containing the honey, and the birds with the longest bills were allowed to try first. The toucan pecked away with vigour, but soon broke his "tawa." Then came the woodpeckers in order, the hipatith, the pithyi, the yātapithyi, the yitsākpa, the waaak, and others whose names need not be mentioned; but one after the other they failed, and had to give up the contest, either through total loss or fracture of their bills. They grieved because of their broken "axes," and at their incapacity to reach the honey.

When all had tried and failed, "Short-bill" came modestly forward and requested permission to try his "tawa," which he affirmed was strong and sharp. Suffering though they were, a titter went round the assembled birds, but they allowed him to try. Quietly he flew to the "eye" (entrance) of the nest, and critically examined the various marks which had been made by his predecessors in the contest. Then carefully selecting a likely spot, he commenced to tap, and after many blows with his "axe," he succeeded in piercing to the nest. Eventually he scooped out a hole sufficiently large to reach the honey, and one after another the birds came and tasted the delicious fluid. Then with great chirruping and singing they proclaimed "Yākwāte-āmaak" the king of the birds.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HEATHENISM

NOTHING of any importance or accuracy was known about the religious tenets and social condition of the Lengua-Mascoy before our arrival among them. It was evident from the first that their beliefs, superstitions, and customs were similar in some respects to those of other heathen races occupying the same low plane; but it was necessary for us to study the subject thoroughly in all its various aspects. We realized that it would be unjust to condemn beliefs and practices which we did not understand, and that it would be unprofitable to urge the abandonment of any which might with advantage be retained or utilized. Our duty as missionaries was to acquaint ourselves with the inner thought of the people, in order that we might be in a position to introduce the higher and purer teaching of Christianity both tactfully and advantageously, and thus the better to secure their acceptance of the Christian faith. Only the salient points, therefore, of their social state and religious ideas, so far as they affect the introduction of Christianity, are here dealt with, and the various descriptions and views which are given refer exclusively to those which exist in the heathen state of the people.

To the casual observer, the Lengua-Mascoy would appear to be of a very low order, their manner of life seeming to be little removed from that of animals. Their dwellings are of the rudest type, and a whole village, sufficient to accommo-

date three hundred people, can be erected in less than a day. They neither serve to keep out the heavy tropical rains and intense heat nor to protect their occupants from the sudden changes of the weather. Of furniture they are quite ignorant. Their beds consist of a raw hide spread upon the ground, their nightly covering being simply the garment of the day. Their cooking utensils are of the most primitive and scanty description ; in fact, the worldly possessions of a whole family (exclusive of a few domestic animals) are easily carried by the mother when moving from one camp to another. They have little idea of providing a store of food against accidents, and are content to live from day to day upon such supplies as they can obtain by hunting in the prairie, forest, river, or swamp, or from their meagre gardens.

This low state of existence must not be taken as a true indication of the standard of their intelligence or capacity for learning, without due consideration of the circumstances of their lives and the nature of the country they inhabit. They are forced to travel from place to place in search of sustenance. The climatic conditions are, on the whole, favourable to an outdoor life ; therefore the building of substantial and permanent dwellings is not only unnecessary, but would be a waste of energy, considering their environment. The soil and climate are such that it would be impossible for them, with their limited resources, to live by agriculture, and for the same reason the maintenance of flocks and herds to any extent would be equally difficult. The fact that with very slight training and with suitable tools they soon learn to build very serviceable huts, and to construct excellent fences, wells, and tanks, proves that intelligence and capacity are not lacking, but merely latent.

Although they know how to manufacture several kinds of intoxicating liquor, they are by no means an intemperate people. Women and lads never taste intoxicants, and a



drunken Indian is unknown, except at their periodic feasts, or in European settlements.

Morality, judged in the strict sense of the word, is certainly the exception rather than the rule; but being without any lofty religious ideas and utterly ignorant as they are of the revealed faith, their weaknesses cannot be judged from a spiritual standpoint. On the whole, their sexual relationship, compared with that of other heathen nations, is by no means as bad as one would expect to find. A point of importance is that no permanent disgrace or stigma follows any irregularity, and therefore the serious consequences of sin, such as the ruination of the life and future of those indulging in it, does not affect these people as it does those on a higher plane.

Among themselves they are exceedingly peaceful, and serious quarrels are of rare occurrence. The children, too, are well-behaved and good-natured in their play. Relations and connections live on good terms with each other throughout their usually long lives, and we have known couples who have lived happily together for over sixty years. Murder is scarcely known; indeed, it is seldom that anyone is even injured or wounded intentionally. They are extremely hospitable to each other, sharing their scanty supplies, and even their ornaments, without murmuring. But their friendliness to each other, the absence of serious crime, and their generosity to their neighbours, cease to be so praiseworthy when the source often of such seeming virtues is discerned. Their religious convictions are so strong in the case of murder, for example, or serious quarrelling, that their natural passions are held in check for fear of the consequences. Living as they do in a wild and lonely country, liable to attacks by their enemies, and perpetually haunted by the fear of ghosts and evil spirits, it is necessary for them to live in communities; and in a state in which fixed laws and a settled

government do not exist, the only way in which the communal system can be maintained is by assuming at any rate an outward appearance of accommodating friendship. They cannot afford to ostracize unprofitable members of society, and thus the idle and thriftless are allowed to impose upon their more industrious fellows. In their hearts, however, such vices as hatred, bitterness, jealousy, and selfishness exist as strongly as in the case of other unregenerate races.

The most prevalent crime amongst the Lengua-Mascoy is that of infanticide, which they do not rank in the same category as the murder of a grown child or adult,\* and this evil is so general that the very existence of the race is endangered. Yet it must not be for a moment imagined that they are callous, cruel, or lacking in affection for their offspring; on the contrary, they often spoil their children by kindness and over-lenient treatment. Some have been known to commit suicide on account of their deep grief at the death of a beloved child. There are many reasons for infanticide, and when looked at purely from their standpoint they have some real foundation. The strongest incentive to the crime is the difficulty of nurturing and bringing up a young family under most unfavourable conditions, especially the shortage of food. It is for this reason that an Indian mother nourishes her child up to even four and sometimes five years of age, and she feels that under her hard, exposed, and trying life, it would be absolutely impossible for her to maintain and suckle a numerous family. There are various superstitious beliefs connected with the birth of a child, which with them have the force of religious convictions, and are often responsible for its murder. There is no doubt that infanticide owes its origin to stress of circumstances, and that sanction was sought for it on religious grounds, in order to obviate

\* There seems to be an underlying but ill-defined idea that until a child is weaned it cannot claim an independent existence.

the instinctive repugnance to such a crime. Probably many then found it a convenient practice, and stifled their conscience, so that in time the custom became a confirmed and approved habit.

Another feature of heathenism, found among the Lengua-Mascoy Indians, which is apt to strike one at first sight as being extremely cruel, and indicative of a total lack of natural affection, is their habit of hastening the death of the aged, and the victims of a serious accident or sickness. So long as there is any probable hope of recovery, the patient is kindly treated and attended to, but their attitude to these unfortunates at once changes when they realize that their efforts are in vain. They then hasten death by starvation and neglect, sometimes even by violence, and wilful, premature burial is by no means an uncommon occurrence.

I have no desire to champion heathenism or to strain a point in order to minimize the crimes and failings of these people, my only endeavour is to seek to do them justice. The reader must not look upon these children of nature as altogether cruel, callous, selfish, and vicious. A very real strain of humanity exists in them, and their nature in reality differs little from ours. Their conditions of life, their creed and superstitions, so very opposite to our own, lead them to commit atrocities repugnant to our ideas. Environment, lack of equal opportunities, and the nobler, revealed faith which we possess, but which we did not acquire for ourselves, make all the difference between us and them.

Let us consider their case apart from Christian ideas of which they are ignorant. Should we not, under similar conditions, probably act as they do? Here is a man, aged and infirm, suffering the natural consequences of a long life of privation and exposure. His declining strength cannot stand the strain of moving from place to place, and he is unable to eat and properly digest the coarse, rough food

which alone is obtainable. Thus the lingering years of his life prove a painful burden to him. He has been a kind parent, protecting, caring for and loving his children. With us, such a parent would be lovingly tended to the last; nothing would be too good for him, and no pains would be spared to minister to his every want and desire. But in the case of this old man, he is an Indian of the wilds, his sufferings are visible to his children, his days are numbered. They have no means whatsoever of relieving his pain, or of administering adequately to his comfort, so they take steps to hasten his end and free him from suffering, rather than see him die a lingering and painful death before their eyes. They never resort to unnecessary cruelty, except such as their religious rites dictate. In so doing they have no fear of Divine wrath and no idea of a salvation from sin, or of a happy eternity beyond the grave. The cutting short of suffering does not in their minds cause them to think that they have done anything but a natural act. How often we hear thoroughly Christian people remark after the death of a suffering friend, "What a happy release!" Can we wonder, therefore, at these unenlightened and primitive people adopting what are to them humane measures in hastening the end of a victim of a serious accident, or a hopeless disease, since their resources make the preservation of life impossible?

In the frequent and often fatal cases of snake-bite, they make every possible effort to save the victim, and as soon as word of such a disaster reaches a distant village, men will hurry off to render what assistance they can, even during the night, and irrespective of distance or weather.

The burial alive of a sufferer, and the barbarous customs practised at funerals, are prompted by their religious beliefs, not by cruelty or callousness.

Although they believe in the immortality of the soul, they are ignorant of anything approaching to the resurrection of

the body. Their crude ideas of the after-life give no hope of any better existence. The one thing desired is physical life on earth, the one thing dreaded is death. To them the future is a dark, cheerless, undefined something, and although they believe in the meeting of departed souls, they shrink from contemplating the subject. Their great aim is to forget as soon as possible even their nearest and dearest, once they have passed away.

Dreams are regarded by them as the experiences of the wandering soul when absent from the body during sleep, and exert such a powerful influence over their lives that they have often been known to regulate their actions in conformity with the most minute details contained in them. Poit's attempt on my life was due to a dream, the purport of which was that I shot him as a punishment for certain wrongs which he had done. According to his interpretation, my soul had met and shot his during their wanderings from the body, and although he was unharmed in the body, yet from his dream he argued that it was my intention to shoot him. He therefore felt perfectly justified in his attempt to take my life by shooting me, and in a manner which tallied as closely as possible with the details of his dream. It is remarkable that they should have a very clearly defined idea of the meaning of "intention," quite apart from dreams. They not only regard evil as such when it takes an active form, but look upon a wicked imagination as an equally grave offence. In many cases they have been known to hold a person guilty on the ground of premeditation only. The execution of Poit by his own people for his attempt to murder me is a striking proof of the way in which they regard intention. His plea was that he was innocent, because he had not taken my life, but his executioners readily retorted that his failure to do so was through no fault of his, and that his intention was to commit murder.



## CHAPTER IX

### HEATHEN TYPES

THE degrading and depressing environment of heathenism, such as is instanced in the last chapter, does not tend to produce men of strong character and sterling qualities; yet there are to be found in the Chaco men and women who, although brought up in an abandoned condition, are not without some noble traits, and have redeeming qualities latent in them which, if properly developed, are capable of attaining to a high standard.

In the early years of my sojourn among the Lengua-Mascoy, when living in close touch with the people in their savagery and heathenism, I was encouraged to find some who possessed high aspirations in spite of their environment, which fully justified the work we had set ourselves to do. A character sketch of a man called Pinse-ăpawa, a primitive savage of some fifty years of age, may serve to illustrate this statement. He belonged to the party with which Henricksen was associated at Riacho Fernandez, and although not the actual chief, he was the most prominent and influential figure, being possessed of more than the average intelligence of an Indian. He was the first to see the advantages that would accrue to himself and his people by making friends with the foreigners. He came originally from a district in the north-west, about two hundred miles from the River Paraguay, the nearest point of civilization. His father and grandfather had held positions of consequence, and he fully appreciated this fact,

being the only Indian I know, with one exception, who claimed that there was any advantage in hereditary standing. Talking with him one day about his chief, Fernandez, he remarked that he had no power and did not know how to command his people, and that they had little regard for him; then, holding himself proudly, he added: "But my father and my grandfather were great chiefs, and it is only because I am married into this party that I consent to be with Fernandez. I am your friend, and will go with you, and most of my people will follow me." His words proved correct, and I found him a powerful ally, a man of influence and tact, of great shrewdness, and capable of maintaining his authority.

On another occasion, when urging upon him and his people the necessity of treating a wealthy settler on the river-bank with due respect, he replied: "Friend, that man is of your race, but we all know that he is not a chief. We knew him when he wore no boots and did the work of a common labourer; it is only because he has many cows that he pretends he is a chief."

Pinse-ăpawa was a thoroughly practical man, and was evidently gifted with thinking powers. I remember him once relating an incident in which one of his people and the foreigners at a river settlement were concerned. They had accused the Indians to this man of having stolen some cattle, and had told him to go back and inform his people that if any of them again dared to come near their settlement they would be seized and flayed alive; similar threats had been previously used by foreigners, and had had the desired effect. But Pinse-ăpawa was not so easily frightened, for he informed me that on hearing this he concluded that it was only an idle threat, as he had observed that the foreigners were given to boastful language. On the following morning he visited this settlement in company with fifteen Indians, and before he arrived at the stranger's house he bade his men stay a little

way off, but in sight, while he went forward alone to ask the meaning of the threat. Then, with a dry smile, he said: "As soon as the Don saw me approaching he came forward, and, taking my hand, said, 'My friend, come and eat with me.'" He gave me a knowing look, and then added: "I said no more; I saw they were afraid. We received presents, and went away."

Pinse-äpawa was the only Indian I ever knew who was sceptical of some of the superstitions which his people so firmly believed in, and especially their fear of the spirits of the departed. A place near his village, which I was then living in, was supposed to be haunted by the ghost of a man who had died some time before. On the arrival of a party of Indians from the west, I called him aside and asked where he thought they had better camp. He replied: "Over there," indicating the spot which the ghost was supposed to frequent. I reminded him of the danger of sleeping a night in such a quarter, upon which he signed to me to be cautious, and then added in a low tone: "Don't tell them about it, and I shall warn my people not to mention the matter. If they do not know that a ghost is there, they will not be troubled." There is no doubt that he believed in these spirits to a certain extent, and he himself might not have cared to have slept there; but he was an observant man, and although he could not explain the matter, he had evidently come to the conclusion that the fear of ghosts lay chiefly in the imagination only of the people.

On many occasions, when witchcraft was being practised in his village, I observed that he took no part in it. When I questioned him, he informed me that he had no liking for it, and that the sound of the gourd rattle, which is used in witchcraft as well as at feasts, pleased him, but only when connected with merrymaking. On asking him questions about witchcraft, he always replied, "*They* say so-and-so,"

whereas any other Indian always used the word "We." I am perfectly sure that he had very little faith in witch-doctors, he was far too keen-witted a man to be deceived by their trickery and inconsistencies.

As far as education was possible to a primitive and heathen savage brought up in such an environment as the Chaco, Pinse-ăpawa might be truthfully described as an educated man. He was well versed in the history of his own and kindred peoples, such as it was. He was thoroughly acquainted with the geography of his country and the neighbouring districts, and had made a study of the fauna and flora over a large extent of the Indian territory.

In judging the good qualities which Pinse-ăpawa and some of his tribesmen undoubtedly possessed, not only the conditions of their environment must needs be understood, but their opportunities must be properly appreciated, and a fair judgment made as to how far they have used them. Looking thus at the question, Pinse-ăpawa may be rightly styled a gentleman of refined feelings and instinctive courtesy. On one occasion, when handing an English lady from a canoe to the river-bank, remembering that his hand was dirty, he was careful to spread his neckerchief over it before offering her his assistance. I once invited this so-called savage to take a meal with me, and he behaved as well as any gentleman would have done; and yet here was a man who had no knowledge of foreign ways acquitting himself creditably when suddenly introduced to a new culture and novel social habits. If generosity is a mark of a gentleman, then Pinse-ăpawa was one, for he was capable of showing that high type of generosity which entails self-denial and suffering on the part of the giver. I have myself experienced this in many ways from his hands. For example, when sleeping together once on a cold, wet night, he actually insisted on depriving himself of his only garment in order that I might be better sheltered.

On another occasion, when he saw that my life was in danger, he unobtrusively elected to sleep near me; and it was almost by an accident that I discovered that his intention was not to sleep at all, but to keep guard, and that he had secretly armed himself with a club to be ready for eventualities.

He was the first Indian who responded to my endeavours to persuade them to rise above their nomadic and barbarous state; and when, with our help, his village numbered several separate and well-built huts, he joyfully took me by the hand, and said: "Some day my village will rival the town of Concepcion!"

The reader will naturally think that surely this man, about whom I have written so warmly, would prove to be one of the first and staunchest converts to Christianity, but I regret to say that this is not the case. It does not follow that intelligence, energy, and desire to advance and to make a position in the world must necessarily lead to the acceptance of the Christian faith. Ambition and desire to succeed from selfish ends are not of the spirit of Christianity. This man would willingly have thrown in his lot with us so far as it would have helped his own advancement in life. He coveted power, and his one great ambition was to be thought important. He wanted to be free from everything uncomfortable and troublesome in life. In other words, he was self-seeking; and as soon as he found that we were not come merely to advance his temporal interests, and to place him in a position of power, but that we taught the lowly, unselfish doctrine of Jesus, he was disappointed. The rich young man found it hard to give up his possessions for Christ; so this man could see no advantage in Christianity unless it conferred on him riches and power.

Pinse-ăpawa was observant enough to see that he would not gain what he was seeking through us, and accordingly, although remaining on friendly terms, he has avoided joining



our party, but attached himself to one of the European settlements on the River Paraguay, where he could obtain some of the advantages of civilization without the discipline and, to him, unpleasant restrictions of Christianity.

The women of the Chaco, although by no means slaves, are, nevertheless, far inferior to the men in intellectual powers, and, in fact, in almost every respect ; therefore it may be interesting to instance the case of the few heathen women who stood out prominently beyond the remainder of their sex, and who wielded a great influence over even the men.

The most prominent character of Indian social life during the early years of the mission was Mängwiamai-inkyin. She was a powerful woman in every respect, a veritable leader of her sex. Her sphere of influence was widespread, and she was well known in every village between the Monte Lindo and San Carlos Rivers, and even among the border clans of the Towothli, Suhin, and Kyisapäng tribes. In her day she was, without exception, the leading woman at all feasts, whether of a religious or a festive character. She was powerfully built, and possessed of remarkably good features, in which strength of character and will were strongly marked. She was a thoroughly capable woman, and in the feminine occupations of weaving and pottery-making, few could equal, none could excel her. She was a leader in iniquity, bold and daring, not only sinning herself, but delighting in leading others into evil.

She was more skilled than any other woman I have known in the knowledge and use of pernicious medical secrets peculiar to her people. Although the morality of the Indians, judged from an English standpoint, is in most respects thoroughly bad, she was the only one in our experience of her tribe who openly dared to have two husbands at one time, and it is remarkable how she contrived for years, not only to compel these two men to be content with such an arrangement, but



### THE VILLAGE SWEEPER

The markings on the blanket indicate the village or district from which he comes, much as Scottish clans are known by their tartans.



### A GROUP OF INDIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

Two are spinning wool and one is weaving a blanket on a frame.



by her force of will to so intimidate them that they remained more faithful to her than was generally the rule among Indians. The older man, whom she married first, came originally from a kindred tribe some hundreds of miles farther north. This man she retained as the head of her home ; the younger, very much her junior, she utilized only as her companion when visiting at religious and social feasts, but both alike had to hunt and work for the maintenance of her household. She became our friend on our first meeting with her, and remained so until her death.

Although she was interested in our teaching, and acquired a good deal of knowledge concerning it, she never evinced any marked desire to break from heathenism and adopt Christianity until the last two years of her life. She was a ready pupil, however, in acquiring the arts of civilization, and eagerly adopted the more refined customs which we were enabled to introduce. She soon learned that the flaunting of open vice was unbecoming, but any real abhorrence of sin, as such, did not seem to affect her. After some years she was admitted to one of our families, and speedily excelled in all manner of housework. She proved energetic, willing, highly intelligent, and strictly honest, and could be entrusted to carry out work single-handed and without supervision in a manner such as few Indian women have attained to. She was kind-hearted and sympathetic, was always concerned for our welfare, and was seriously alarmed, and did her best to warn us, when any danger threatened. Although she never openly professed Christianity, she not only gave attention to its teaching, and joined ultimately in the religious services, but she exercised her influence in a marked degree in order to persuade her son and her niece to pay attention to our instruction, and to become Christians, which both eventually did.

In 1898 she brought her son to visit me, telling him in my

presence that it was her wish that he should look upon himself as belonging to me, and to yield me the respect and obedience which were customary among their people when for any good reason a non-relative assumed, or was requested to assume, the position of a foster-parent. I accepted the position, and shortly before her death she reiterated her injunction to her son with respect to me, and the boy, as he then was, even since he has grown to manhood, has always treated me with the regard which he believed was my right.

She died during an epidemic of measles in 1901, acquitting herself bravely to the last ; for although she herself was stricken with the disease and reduced to great weakness, she continued rendering us all the help in her power by ministering to her stricken companions until the day before her death, which happened rather suddenly and unexpectedly.

Although we have no very tangible proofs to bring forward, we have good reason to believe that her spiritual attitude had undergone a radical change, and in spite of the fact that she had not been admitted in a formal way to the visible Church below, we do not doubt but that she died a partaker, if a semi-unconscious one, in the great free gift of salvation.



## PART II



## CHAPTER I

### PREPARATORY TEACHING

THE very natural inquiry has often been made as to what methods we employed in introducing Christianity among the Lengua-Mascoy Indians. Considering that they possessed no religion in the true sense of the word, and that their language, which took us many years to acquire, did not readily lend itself to religious expression, it is not to be wondered at that some eleven years elapsed before the first convert was won.

The first step we took in order to introduce our message to them was to show in as practical a way as possible that we loved them. We remembered and appreciated the Divine statement that "If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" We were the living illustration of what Christianity is to these primitive people, and their acceptance or refusal of our message depended entirely upon how far we lived up to its true expression. They had no literature and no mental training to fit them accurately to criticize and distinguish between the true and the false; but they instinctively knew a good and loving action when they saw it, and could tell as well as any other people whether a man was sincere or not.

It was not our desire to lead the people to imagine that we were paragons of perfection or that in ourselves we were so much better than they. On the contrary, we gave them clearly to understand that we had like passions with them, and that any goodness which they saw in us was not of our

development, but the gift of the Master of whom we had come to tell them. When we assured them that by natural instinct we were inclined to be selfish and sinful, they could not understand why we did not run to the same extent of riot as they did, especially when we showed them any kindness or self-denial. So soon as this apparent contradiction in our lives arrested their attention, we were in a position to point them to the Great Cause, and assure them that the same Purifying Power was able and willing to transform them too, if they so desired it.

In order to appeal to them the more strongly, we made ourselves one with them as far as it was possible. We sought no luxuries, but lived simply and economically. We did not even secure reasonable comfort, but shared the hardships and trials as well as the pleasures of the people. We were in a position to take a comparatively easy place and to pay the natives to do the drudgery, but we determined to lead in all difficult, trying, and dangerous situations, in order to show them that in actual fact we expected them to do and bear nothing from which we ourselves shrank. We held, in a measure, the old idea of a warrior leading his troops to battle by always being in the thickest of the fight. It was little use our adopting the policy of the Mohammedan prophet who after having stirred up his people to a holy war told them to go forth and conquer the infidel, while he himself remained on a hill-top at a safe distance, and prayed for their success. We considered prayer converted into action to be more availing. By living in the midst of the people, and being therefore always accessible to them, we sought by our life and work to prove that we were qualified to lead them. It is easy to assume authority, but such assumption only avails when accompanied by power. The only true and satisfactory leaders are those who can prove their fitness as such to the people whom they wish to direct.

Although the Lengua-Mascoy had a limited idea of the guilt of wrong-doing, they were naturally ignorant of the sense of sin as we conceive it, being void of any conception of a Deity to whom they were responsible. Generally speaking, they felt wrong-doing keenly only when found out, and then for fear of the consequences. Their sense, however, of the sin of intention gave us a foundation on which to teach the guilt of the sin of the heart, and indirectly to lead up to the necessity for the atonement. We taught them to realize the existence of a Deity by building on their own conception of the Creation and the First Great Cause. "Their whole mythology is founded upon their idea of the Creation, of which we know only the bare outlines. The Creator of all things, spiritual and material, is symbolized by a beetle. It seems that the Indian idea is that the material universe was first made. The Creator, in the guise of the beetle, then sent forth from its hole in the earth a race of powerful beings—according to many, in an embodied state—who for a time appear to have ruled the universe. Afterwards the beetle formed man and woman from the clay which it threw up from its hole. These were sent forth on the earth, joined together like the Siamese twins. They met with persecution from their powerful predecessors, and accordingly appealed to the creating beetle to free them from their disadvantageous formation. He therefore separated them, and gave them power to propagate their species, so that they might become numerous enough to withstand their enemies. It then appears that some time after this, or at this time, the powerful beings first created became disembodied, as they never appear again in the tradition of the Indians in material form. The beetle then ceased to take any active part or interest in the government of the world, but committed its fortunes to these two races, which have been antagonistic ever since. . . . The Indians' idea, therefore, is briefly this: that there was an



original First Cause, a Creator who planned and made everything, but that He now takes no part in the governance of the universe, and therefore neither rewards nor punishes.

“The Indian appears to be a believer in simple and natural laws only. He believes that a man prospers and is happy in this life and the next in so far as he abides by these natural laws, and that he suffers and is punished when he infringes them. To a certain extent this is very true—heaven and hell are of man’s own making. The Indian, of course, has no idea of a fall from primitive purity or of an atonement for sin—that is, an atonement made by some perfect being on behalf of the imperfect—and no idea of a resurrection of the body.” \*

Different as this creed is from ours, we were nevertheless able to make the few similarities which it bears a basis upon which to work. The following instance will serve to illustrate how successful this method proved.

A promising and intellectual Indian, after having received some rudimentary instruction, was asked to address his people, and in his own way to present the truths which he had learnt. He began by recounting their tradition of the origin of all things, and then went on to explain what he had heard from us of God as the Creator. He referred to the apparent connection of their version with ours, adding that doubtless ours was the more correct, as we, being clever people, committed our traditions to writing, while they had probably forgotten much that their ancestors knew. “These people,” he said, referring to us, “have told us that a long time ago the Son of God came from above in the form of a man, and lived in a country not very far from their own. He preached His ‘Good News’ to the people of that country, and they in turn told it to others. This Son of God explains

\* “An Unknown People in an Unknown Land,” chap. xi., pp. 114-116.

to us many things we do not know, and shows us that our traditions are wrong.

“We have known these people for some years,” he said, “and we have always found them truthful and friendly to us. We are sure, therefore, that they are not deceiving us.” He went on to appeal to his people on the grounds of their traditions, saying that it was evident, although they had not thought of it before, that the creative beetle owned all things because it had created them all. He then brought forward illustrations from their life to show how they had in many ways spoilt the work of the beetle. He reminded them of their custom of mutilating the bodies of their dead, and of killing their children, which were created by the beetle, adding that, according to their law, compensation would be required for the injuries done, and that not only for the actual damage, but for the intention to do harm. Alluding to their belief in dreams and to the way in which they interpreted them, he cited, as an example, the case of a man who dreamed that another had stolen from his garden; although no fruit had actually been taken, yet the wandering of the man’s spirit to his garden was with the purport to steal, and showed what he would have done had he been in bodily form. He explained that on the demand of the dreamer compensation would be paid, because, according to the dream, it was actually the intention of the other to steal from him.

“Surely,” said he, “if the beetle is so powerful that he could make man, he can also punish man for wronging what he has created, or for the intention to do so. Therefore, unless we would incur his wrath, we are under the necessity of giving him compensation. How shall we compensate him? Shall we give him fruit from our gardens? But it is only the produce of the fruit which was first created, and therefore it does not belong to us, but to the beetle. So that will not do.” He then suggested the produce of the chase,

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the ostrich or the deer, but again explained that they were the offspring of those first created, and that therefore they also belonged to the beetle. Other suggestions which he made proved equally futile, until he reduced the question of compensation to an impossibility.

He then explained that since they had no means of paying for the evil they had done, there could be no alternative but to suffer the penalty, were it not for the "Good News" which had been brought to him and his people—namely, that although nothing of their own possessions nor anything they could obtain would satisfy, yet God provided a way of escape from their serious plight by sending His own Son without sin in the form of man as an Atonement for their sins.

Infanticide being one of the most prevalent crimes of the people, we naturally opposed it to the best of our ability. We showed them that it was not only a sin and an unnatural act, but that if they persevered in it they would soon cease to exist as a race. We made much of those who preserved their children, and severely condemned those who destroyed them.

On one occasion we held a public gathering of the Indians, at which we brought forward four women who had spared the lives of four children each. They sat on a platform with their children as an object-lesson to the assembly, and were publicly eulogized. After presenting the mothers with a printed certificate, they were crowned by a lady missionary with wreaths of flowers. The certificates contained a promise that certain provision would be made for both the mothers and their children if the conditions named were observed, and the text of this was publicly read. All those who were present were exhorted to follow the noble example which these few women had set them.

Numerous sermons were preached against this national crime both by ourselves and by some of the Indians, and we

once took the liberty of introducing explanatory sentences into the Decalogue, in order to impress upon the people the enormity of their crime. It took long years to combat infanticide, and even now it is far too prevalent, but the many peculiar ways by which we endeavoured to appeal to the consciences of these heathens proved markedly successful in largely reducing the number of cases.

The teaching on the Resurrection has always proved an enthralling subject to them, and they very soon began to modify and in many cases abolish such heathen atrocities as the mutilation of their dead and dying. I have heard an Indian alluding to these crimes in publicly addressing his people, and picturing the shame and confusion they would feel when on the Judgment Day they saw the lacerated bodies of their friends. This was an entirely new thought to them, for although they had a shadowy belief that the owners of maimed bodies would appear as maimed spirits, yet they never contemplated actually seeing their bodily forms again. In the early years of our teaching it was difficult for their childish minds to grasp that the resurrected body mysteriously differed in many respects from the natural body, but looked upon it as an actual reconstruction of the literal flesh and bones which they had buried.

Death to them was a mournful event, unilluminated by any hope of a bright eternity, and their one desire was to forget their buried friends. We impressed upon them the fact of a final reunion, and so led them to remember rather than forget those who had departed. We gradually prevailed upon them to make their graves in one place, instead of scattering them here and there in the forest, as was their custom ; and in order to show the brightness of hope in death, we induced them to attend a funeral *en masse*, and to collect flowers to lay on the grave. To stand by an open grave at a Christian funeral, and to hear in their own

language the singing of "There is a Happy Land," has a very powerful impression on a heathen, and causes him to take a new view of life and death.

It cannot be said that the Lengua-Mascoy are a truthful people, but they are poor liars, and anyone possessing an intimate knowledge of them can easily tell when they are prevaricating. One very fruitful source of their lying is their desire to please, and to live on good terms with all around them. They will generally agree with anyone even to the very verge of falsehood. They are very quick to perceive what one wants to know and believe, and whether right or wrong, they will supply just the kind of information that will be acceptable. It may seem strange to say that they are very sensitive if their word is doubted. If they are cross-questioned, they will admit anything, not from fear but from a sarcastic impulse, as much as to say: "You do not believe what I tell you; you want me to admit this or that; I will admit what you want and even more, since you want falsehood, not truth."

As a people they are extremely jealous, and cannot bear anyone receiving more favours than themselves. Like all ignorant people, they are vain and conceited, and greatly value the smallest praise or flattery. This weakness induces them to resort to scandal and tale-bearing in order to win confidence and affection for themselves, and to diminish regard and respect for their rivals. They are capable of strong personal attachment, which their system of family or clan life helps to foster. Their world being small, and their circle of interests narrow, the idea of living for an ideal or for a great cause or purpose, is beyond them, and their tendency, when they rise above mere animal desires, is to attach themselves to a person. Among themselves such attachment is not uncommon, and in the case of the missionaries it is very pronounced. We have found it difficult to



get the natives to adhere to us as a party, and to work with us for a great and common cause ; but their instinct is to adopt one of us as their particular man, and to place their entire confidence in him.

As a people they are not thieves, for although we have lived among them for many years with our goods indifferently secured and our houses easily accessible, yet we have had little cause to complain of them ; and when pilfering has taken place, it has generally been through carelessness or a mistaken kindness in failing immediately to censure any wrong-doing.

Their ideas of honesty vary considerably from ours. Without compunction they will appropriate a few pumpkins from a garden, while they respect a tree containing honey which has been marked for possession by another. The same applies to household utensils or firewood left in a deserted hut, as if such were placed under a sacred taboo. The real fact of the matter is that among themselves they look upon certain kinds of pilfering much in the same way as some good people at home regard white lies, but what they consider serious they are quite conscientious about.

They are scrupulous in paying debts. For example, I have known a man who had bartered an axehead from us, but who had not sufficient to complete the purchase, return after a three years' absence, when the whole matter had been forgotten by us, and present the amount that was short.

With all their vices they nevertheless possess many virtues, and if brought under the influence of the pure and lofty teaching of the Gospel they can, as has been proved, attain to a high standard of Christian living.

## CHAPTER II

### FOUNDATION-STONES

It was fully seven years before we were in a position to attempt the foundation of a Christian Church among the Lengua-Mascoy, but during this period we were carefully studying the peculiar conditions and characteristics of those whom we hoped to win for Christ.

While thus surveying the field and its prospects, we were considering the question of how best to organize the future Church and the most suitable forms to adopt. We went forth to the Chaco Indians with a view of establishing a native organization, and one so constituted and suited to the needs of the people as to fit it to become their national Church. It was not our intention, nor did we feel under any obligation to make it an exact copy of the Anglican Church, but believing, as we do, that her doctrine and government are as near the ideal as can be reasonably expected, we naturally decided to adhere strictly to the simple evangelical principles of our own national faith.

We saw no difficulty in the question of government, because the Indian character lent itself to a rule by chiefs, who bore no autocratic sway, but worked in conjunction with their people, and held the position more of fathers and leaders than of kings and autocrats. But when we came to consider forms and ceremonies, we had to take into account the fact that we were dealing with a heathen and superstitious people. We therefore saw that it was necessary to avoid anything

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which, though simple and helpful to us, might lead to superstitious ideas in them.

The Indians, although in many respects extremely independent, lack force of character, and are apt to lean unduly upon anyone in whom they place implicit confidence. We soon found, therefore, that we should have to struggle against their inclination to look upon us as their infallible guides. We wanted to make them self-reliant Christians, to bring them into direct touch with their Master, and to force them to think and act for themselves by using their own judgment. We were their teachers to lead them to Christ, not mediators between Him and them, and we therefore found it necessary to introduce such forms, ceremonies, and discipline as would tend to make them realize their proper position, and to feel their responsibility as members of His Church equally with ourselves. We therefore determined to give them a full voice and part in the management, development, and extension of their Church.

We recognized that everything in their heathenism was not intrinsically bad, but that, on the contrary, there was much well worth retaining. The higher features of their moral code were in many cases quite in conformity with the law of God, and even their spiritual ideas in some cases prepared the way for the reception of the revealed truth. Many of their customs, although quite contrary to the usages of civilization, were in themselves harmless, and as they were national we were not called upon to interfere with them. So far, then, as we had discovered a satisfactory foundation we were prepared to accept and build upon it.

By mentioning a few of these points the force of our claim will be made clearer to the reader. Their belief that all things were created by a distinct First Cause, and that man, the supreme act of creation, was produced independently and directly by that First Cause, has already been dealt with.

They believed in the immortality of the soul, but the after-life to them was simply a continuation of the present, only in a disembodied state; and since they regarded the body as the only medium of enjoyment, they did not look forward to the life after death with any pleasure. This creed, un-Christian as it is, was nevertheless a starting-point from which to work.

They possessed no idols, but made wax and other images, which they used only as charms. They had respect for their parents, were kind to their children, attached to their relations, faithful to their friends, and hospitable to their tribesmen. They were monogamists, and condemned the sins of murder, immorality, theft, false-witness, and covetousness. They disliked anger and quarrelling among themselves, and as a nation they were not given to either. But their moral views did not extend beyond their own and kindred tribes; they harboured the greatest bitterness, and had no respect for the rights of those whom they looked upon as foreigners. All these qualities, although unfortunately confined to the very narrow limit of their own kindred, were good in themselves, and made a base upon which to build higher and purer ideals, a ground for inculcating a wider charity.

The native costume of both the men and women is not only picturesque, adequate to their needs, and well suited to their life and country, but quite sufficient to fulfil the laws of decency. It may be contrary to our European ideas of propriety, but it is suggestive of nothing indelicate in them. Their condition of life is such that neither their health, comfort, nor appearance is benefited by the adoption of tawdry and cheap European clothing. To encourage such among them, especially in the case of the women, develops a desire for a display of finery and consequent expense which they are unable to meet, and which, instead of tending to a higher and purer life, is an indirect incentive to immorality. An

expression we often hear used is that such-and-such a heathen "was dressed as a Christian." I utterly fail to see that costume has anything to do with Christianity; the wearing of modern European garments is certainly not a condition to the acceptance of the faith.

As the Indian Church developed we made no objection to the men and women attending in their ordinary native dress; nor could we see anything incompatible in an Indian preaching or assisting at a service in full native costume.

The Indians had their own laws concerning marriage, and we acknowledged those contracted in their heathen state as binding, at the same time impressing upon them to maintain the fidelity which was laid down as one of their marriage observances.

Many customs connected with their married life are ideal, but cannot be touched upon here. They are such as Western Christians have seldom attained to, and their very observance exposes them to great dangers. We also worked upon native lines in emphasizing the serious nature of engagements.

Chaco women do not rank as equals with the men, but they are by no means downtrodden or imposed upon. On the arrival of a party of Indians, only the men are referred to for information, the number and degree of the women being ignored. During discussions the women sit apart, and they are allowed no direct share in purely religious ceremonies. In accordance with Christian teaching, we found it necessary to give the women their proper place, and to impress upon the people that they had equal right of access to the Deity. We therefore allowed them to pray in public, and did not think it necessary to enforce the wearing of a covering on their heads. We thought it wise not to lay too much stress on these minor matters, realizing that as the people came more into contact with modern civilization they would in the



natural course of things modify their primitive customs in many respects.

Whatever changes we might find it necessary to make if ever the Lengua-Mascoy Church were to become a large and important one, we did not feel at all called upon, when in her infancy, to relegate to a side-path the women who were just emerging from heathenism. We have had the pleasure of hearing women address their own sex with considerable force and power, and recognizing that some of them would prove useful teachers of their sisters, we felt that more good would be accomplished by giving them every opportunity of realizing that they too had a full and active share in their Church—the more so as the native tendency was to put too many restraints upon the women's part in public affairs.

A certain amount of knowledge is required by the Church at home before admission is granted to full membership, and it is clearly intended that mere mental grasp of certain truths is not sufficient, but that it must be accompanied by a change of heart and life. This spiritual change, however, is not always adequately secured, and therein lies one great danger to the Church. Too many enter her membership simply because it is considered proper to do so, and because they would appear peculiar were they to fail in following the general custom. The desire also to have a large roll of members, and to make a fair show as regards numbers, is apt to blind the eyes of pastors to the real living necessities of the Christian life. Knowledge is necessary, but a change of life and heart is much more so. We bore this in mind in laying the foundations of the Lengua-Mascoy Church, and looked more to the trend of character in a novice rather than to mere knowledge and a capacity for answering certain questions in a set form.

We felt that one of the surest ways of maintaining Christian vigour in the young converts was to use their capacity, how-

ever small it might be, in helping to spread the "Good News" both privately and publicly among their fellows. Although such a course had many advantages, we recognized that it had its dangers, too. The Indian acquired Christian knowledge little by little; with him it was a case of line upon line, precept upon precept. He was not in a position, like the average European, to study the whole question of the revealed Faith in its fulness, and then, after forming his opinions, to decide upon the attitude which he was to adopt towards it. The truth came to him in a gradual way, developing from the little he knew to a wider knowledge. In taking such a course, we were only following the example of the Almighty Himself in preparing the children of Abraham to be His own peculiar people, and through them to scatter His blessings among mankind.

It was not unusual during a conversation with his companions to hear an Indian state that his knowledge of the new Faith had reached as far as Noah, Abraham, Joseph, or Moses, as the case might be, by which he implied that the new teaching was a great subject, and that it would be years before he acquired a full grasp of it. A man who had mastered the Bible narrative as far as the Flood, and believed in the same, was in a position to communicate such knowledge to his fellows, and being an Indian, the testimony which he bore, and the faith which he possessed, had much greater weight with his hearers than anything we could have taught, no matter how crudely he might have expressed it. We therefore encouraged such a one to address his people, and to carry the knowledge which he had acquired to the villages around.

By this means the "Tasik Amyaa," or "Good News," was not only spread abroad, but by listening to these native teachers we saw clearly how much of the new Faith they had grasped, and what misconceptions had crept in; we were then

enabled to correct them. Another important result was that we learned their system of thought and mode of expression. The weakness of many missionaries in acquiring a strange and unwritten language is that they think and express themselves as Europeans, literally translating, it may be, English ideas and phraseology into the foreign tongue, instead of adopting purely native idioms, by which alone the hearts and understandings of the people can be satisfactorily reached.

These Indian teachers led by no means pure lives, but their sins and failings gradually became fewer; when once they had embraced one point of the new Faith, they acted up to it in their lives. Perhaps our greatest difficulty in leading the people to accept Christ was their ignorance in imagining that we possessed such pure and lofty characters that it was utterly impossible for them to copy us. But when they saw one of their own tribesmen succeed in renouncing a certain sin, even if he still retained his other vices, they became encouraged. "If this man," they argued, "can with safety abandon certain forms of witchcraft, and feel happier and better for so doing, surely we can do the same."

Did space allow, innumerable illustrations could be given to bear out this statement, but one must suffice. They shrank with horror from going near a place where anyone had died or had been buried, for fear of the ghostly consequences. We of course showed no such fear, and suffered no harm thereby. We appealed to them on this ground to discredit such dangers, but their reply was: "You are foreigners, and have knowledge and strength which we do not possess." Many even believed that we had power to bind the spirits of the dead so that they could not molest us.

We realized that this superstitious fear would never be abandoned by them until such time as one of their people should break the spell. An opportunity at last occurred. A child had been murdered in a certain spot which was well



A GROUP OF INDIAN WOMEN

Some are teasing wool, some spinning, and one weaving a blanket. A young pet ostrich is in the foreground.





known to the people, and they consequently feared to approach it. We appealed to Kyemapsithyo (afterwards our first convert), not then baptized, but well advanced in faith and knowledge, to prove to his tribesmen the groundlessness of their dread. He was asked to sleep for two whole nights upon the actual scene of the crime, and eventually he consented. He apparently slept little on the first night, but maintained that he had not been disturbed. On the second night, having gained increased courage and confidence, he slept comfortably. The people were naturally surprised. "If he can do this," they argued, "any of us can." A great blow was thus dealt to heathen fear and superstition.

In many ways such as this, subsequent acts of Christian Indians gradually undermined heathenism. As they attained to a greater grasp of the truth, and sought to live a purer life, opposition was aroused. The heathen were friendly to us so long as we did not interfere with their customs and practices, but when it dawned upon them that certain of their number were determined to break away from witchcraft, they soon realized that the dislocation of their ancient system was not far distant. The witch-doctors in particular were far-seeing enough to perceive that once heathenism was discredited, their power would die. A spirit of hostility thus arose against those who followed us, and the stimulus of opposition was supplied which is so necessary to brace the young Christian to face the responsibilities laid upon him, and to draw nearer to his God and fellow-workers.

When a man spoke in public and condemned certain sins, the heathen felt that they were being rebuked. Their pride and self-will were touched to the quick. They hated the preacher, and in order to bring him into disrepute, and to humiliate him, they watched keenly for any inconsistencies in his life. Knowing this, the novice was put upon his mettle, and whatever his inclinations, he felt bound in the defence of

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his honour to abstain from those things which he condemned in others.

Utter weakness inevitably attacks any Church system, the fighting part of which is confined to a class, and upon which the ordinary members lean instead of upon themselves. By encouraging the Indian to teach publicly and to bear a leading part in the building up of his Church, the way was prepared for the organization of a band of trained, tested, and well-equipped evangelists, without whom the spread of Christianity among the various tribes can never be satisfactorily accomplished. It made the people realize that the Church founded among them was their own, and not an interloper headed, led, and managed by foreigners. Stability and permanence were thus given to the otherwise weak props.

We were not ignorant of the dangers attending such a system. The standard of the people was so low that they could not reasonably be allowed to shape the destiny of their Church for a generation or two to come without our control and aid. But we held only the guiding reins, and sought as far as possible to lay the responsibility upon them, and to gradually increase it as they became capable of bearing it.

We had to guard against the possibility of familiarity in the handling of sacred topics, and the consequent degeneration into irreverence and flippancy. We realized that when men who had as yet no stability of character were allowed to air their opinions in public, conceit and vanity were likely to be engendered in them through habitually posing as wise and superior persons. There was also the peril of spiritual pride infecting such novices, owing to the continual reference to their spiritual state, while criticism and censuring of the sins and failings of their brethren were calculated to imbue them with pharisaical pride.

## CHAPTER III

### KYEMAPSITHYO

DURING the early stages in the history of the Chaco infant Church, as well as in its subsequent development, no personage figured so prominently as that of Kyemapsithyo, the first convert. A review of his life will not only afford to the reader a type of the novices already alluded to, but will be interesting as a study in character.

It was in the month of September, 1890, when on my first long journey of exploration into the interior of the Paraguayan Chaco, that I first met Kyemapsithyo, or Kyemap, as he is often called.

On reaching the village of Yitlo-yimmaling I found a large concourse of people gathered there for a feast. My arrival among them caused great consternation, and gave rise to much speculation, as I was the first foreigner who had entered their country without an armed band. Among the very first who attracted my attention was a young lad of intelligent manner and energetic bearing; he it was whom afterwards I came to know as Kyemapsithyo. At first sight I was attracted to him, and felt instinctively that he was a lad with a future, and that I must win him at all costs. Little did I think, however, that he would eventually become the first convert to Christianity, and a leading member of the Church that was to arise in that heathen land: one who would prove a historic figure in the development of his

people, a teacher and ruler amongst them, and a pioneer of Christianity and civilization.

I made satisfactory advances with him, although he and his people were naturally very shy of me, and my knowledge of their language was practically nil. I tried to persuade him to accompany me to my settlement, but did not succeed, as his companions evidently influenced him to remain with them.

In personal appearance he was clean and smart, with sharp features and a firm mouth. His hair was carefully brushed, cut in a close fringe over the forehead, falling straight down near the ears, and neatly trimmed round the lower part of the neck after the manner of Egyptian drawings. His scalp-lock was upright and bound with red wool. His home-made blanket tightly bound round his waist, tiny wooden discs in the ears, and a little face-painting, completed his outfit.

I have always observed that an Indian's character can be fairly estimated by his outward appearance. Heavy features, thick lips, and mouth habitually open, are infallible marks of native character, and stamp their possessors with laziness, sensuality, and gluttony. Such a type is, however, easily governed if a firm hand is used. The other type—that of Kyemapsithyo—always connotes intelligence and energy. Those possessed of angular features take more readily to foreign ideas, and have a greater desire to advance. They eat less and think less about food, and are not so brutish as the others; they sin just as much, but more elegantly. The firm mouth indicates strength of character and will, and the Indians dislike it, saying that those whose lips are firmly compressed are bad-tempered; and in a measure they are right.

Kyemap was of a proud, conceited, and overbearing disposition, impulsive in the extreme, and easily offended. These qualities made him very difficult to handle; but he had the

capacity for affection and firm friendship, and, like all Indians, once really won, he remained true and devoted to the last.

His native vanity, combined with his energy, intelligence, and spirit of adventure, made him the more ready to cultivate the company of the foreigner, and to adopt his ideas and ways. I once gave a heavy-faced, slovenly Indian some tomatoes to plant in his garden, but he declined my gift, saying that tomatoes, although very nice, gave only a small fruit, and required as much cultivation and labour spent on them as the much larger and more satisfying pumpkin, which he would not exchange for tomatoes and such little fancy things that the white man loved and cultivated. An Indian of Kyemapsithyo's type would not have made such a remark. I always found him ready to adopt our English manners and customs, even to his own hurt. I once invited him to dine with me, and seeing me put Worcester sauce into my soup—our only dish—he did likewise, but in greater quantity; and although it was evident that he did not enjoy it, but was suffering for politeness' sake, he mastered his feelings, and as if quite used to the relish, quietly finished his soup.

He was not one of those who sought to mimic the white man and deny his own people, as is often found among some of the lower races when they enter suddenly into a higher plane. Kyemapsithyo was a true Indian, and not ashamed of his origin; but the idea that his people might, nay, could, rise to a higher level, and become the equals of civilized people around, appealed to him very strongly; and when he heard of the old empires of Peru and Mexico his imagination was stirred. Doubtless he wondered how it was that these races had risen so high while his own people were so degenerate.

Although I did not succeed in getting Kyemapsithyo to accompany me on my first journey, I did not relax my efforts.



He and his party visited me at Thlagnasinkinmith towards the end of 1891, and I again tried to persuade him to remain with me. He and two companions promised to stay for a few months, but when his party left he managed to evade me and followed them. I felt angry and disappointed, the more so as his two companions remained with me. But this was only Indian diplomacy. They have a great desire to live on friendly and pleasant terms with those whom they accept as friends, but they also like to have their own way, and occasionally to assert their right to do as they please. On this occasion they were unwilling to displease me, seeing I had set my heart on keeping Kyemap. But for some reason they sought to shield him from my influence. They therefore urged him to leave me, but endeavoured to console me by remaining themselves, and assuring me that although Kyemap had acted wrongly, and was not worth troubling about, they would remain with me and be my friends.

I was fully aware that they only stayed in order to gain their point, and that they would leave me when it suited them, but they served me very faithfully for a time. One of them is still with us, and a Christian, although not a great power among his people. The other was Poit, who six years later nearly succeeded in murdering me on the banks of the Monte Lindo River, near the Towothli frontier. He was an able and intelligent man, whom I had great hopes of eventually winning, but the superstitious beliefs which prompted him to attempt my life were too strong for him, and he eventually suffered death at the hands of his people as a punishment for his crime.\*

In the spring of 1892 I at last secured Kyemap, and except for brief periods when he took offence he was never lost to us. His people having noticed my desire to obtain him, and his evident wish to follow me, had, after my previ-

\* See "Unknown People," etc., chap. xxvii., p. 271.

ous attempt, persuaded him to go to the foreigners at Concepcion. He worked there for a short time in a brickyard with his brother Manuel, and later both were taken on board a steamer going up to Brazil. They were treated kindly, saw much of the outside world, and after a time returned to the Chaco. It was after this trip that he came to stay with me. Probably his timidity of the foreigner had been somewhat dispelled by his travels, his lot having been cast among kind-hearted men who treated him well.

Having given Kyemap a position as my house or hut keeper, it was necessary to test his honesty, so I marked all things likely to tempt him, in order that I might punish him at once if he proved dishonest, but I found him quite trustworthy and reliable. Naturally the Indian cannot be treated like a servant at home. Until they are trained, they cannot understand the object of putting by any food left over from one meal for the next, and so without any idea of dishonesty they eat this as well as their own allowance. It must be remembered that in their natural state they live in a primitive (what we might regard as an advanced) kind of socialistic condition, by which tobacco, foodstuff, and like commodities are looked upon as common property; allowances must therefore be made for them accordingly. But as an Indian, a so-called savage, I found Kyemap honest, faithful, a useful and pleasant companion, and a staunch friend.

The next difficulty I experienced with Kyemap occurred after I had rebuked him rather sharply for a certain misdemeanour. His pride was touched, and, Indian-like, he ran away. On inquiry his people informed me that he had gone inland; as I believed them I thought it wise to let him remain there, knowing that in course of time he would return to me. But my disappointment was great when I afterwards discovered that I had been deceived, and that he had gone off to the river settlement near Concepcion, and was associating

and drinking rum with the Paraguayans. I made a great stir about this, and sent some men down to the settlement with strict orders to bring him back at once. They returned without him, saying that he did not want to come back, but had chosen to live with the foreigners, adding that he hated me, and was indulging in every possible evil. "Leave him alone," they said; "he does not appreciate your friendship, but we do, and will serve you." I suspected that these reports were false, and saw in them simply a ruse to get him away from my influence. I therefore sent more men with orders to take him by force if he would not return of his own accord, and threatened to go myself if they were not successful. This had the desired effect, and for a time I had no very serious trouble with him.

In order to keep my hold over him, I had repeatedly urged him to remain single until he reached a suitable age, as I knew that if he married he would be under the influence of his wife and her relations. Shortly after his return from the river settlement, I heard that he had married while living there, but I did not believe the report, thinking that it was circulated in order to cause me to give up my attentions to him. The rumour was so consistently maintained, however, that I became suspicious. One day, in the course of conversation, I brought up the subject of marriage, and emphasized to him the seriousness of the vow. On my pressing him as to the news I had heard, tears came into his eyes, and he confessed that the report was true, and that knowing my objection to his being married he had feared to bring the girl back with him, and had therefore deserted her. According to native law they were not strictly married, as no child had been born to them, and on Kyemap's departure, the girl immediately procured another husband. I realized the mistake I had made, but came to the conclusion that it was best not to interfere in the matter. I have never urged anyone to remain

single since, but, on the contrary, have strongly advocated marriage for all.

As a step towards improving Kyemap's mind, I tried to teach him to read and write, but he was of too impatient a nature, and would not apply himself to such slow and difficult work. At times he seemed to be purposely seeking a quarrel with me, and was continually sulking and looking for an opportunity to get away from me. When I rebuked him, he would absent himself for days or weeks. At other times he was most pleasant, and apparently affectionate and attached to me. It was difficult to comprehend him, but this strange conduct was made plain to me after his conversion, when we were together striving to influence others. The secret came out when he saw that I was losing hope in the case of a man we had long been trying to win for Christ. "Don't be downcast," he said; "I acted strangely towards you at one time, and you could not understand me. I loved you when first we met. You were different to other strangers, and treated us as friends. When I knew more of you and your ways I wanted to be with you and adopt your teaching, but it was so hard. I saw it meant giving up all my pleasure in life, and yet I hated to vex you by doing that which was wrong. I therefore sought excuses to leave you. I wanted you to be so angry that you would say, 'Go away, I will not look on you again'; but though you were often angry, I knew that it was only with grief. When I returned I felt that though you were 'hard in the face' to me, yet you were yearning for me. I felt miserable when apart from you, and could not stay away, and yet I hated to follow you because it meant losing all that I then regarded as happiness in life."

On one occasion Kyemap, Poit, and some other Indians were my companions on a cart journey. I had reason to be angry with the former, who, unable to bear my rebuke, left

me in company with another, saying that he would go to the foreigners at the river. All my other companions maintained that they had gone away, and at nightfall we saw the smoke of their fires in the distance. Poit, noticing my depression, and knowing the cause, called me aside. "He has gone," he said, "but he will not be away many days. I will use enchantments which never fail." He then plucked a certain plant, and looking in the direction which Kyemap and his companion had taken, he waved it. Immediately after turning round and facing our encampment, he threw the plant over his shoulder towards the east, signifying that Kyemap, who had gone that way, was to come back to the west to our camp.

Two days afterwards, to my surprise, while conveying our goods across a river, Kyemap approached. He spoke to none, but as he passed he gave me a furtive glance, and then, receiving no word or look of encouragement, walked on. I at once regretted that I had not unbent and spoken to him. Next day, however, an Indian reported that Kyemap had camped alone about a thousand yards from where we had passed the night. On hearing this I made my way to the spot indicated, and there found him. When I spoke to him he burst out crying, and said that his companion had gone on to the river, but that he could not stay away from me, yet not caring to come back and apologize, he had camped close to us for three nights, and had followed our carts at a distance. He had had no other food but wild fruit, and very little of that. I told him to join the party, and after having eaten, to bear his share of the work to be done.

Space will not allow me to go into too much detail of Kyemap's life, and of the seven years of hard struggle before we had the joy of welcoming him as the first Lengua-Mascoy Christian.



I well remember on New Year's Day, 1894, taking him aside and speaking to him directly about his soul and his future. He had already received some Christian teaching, but the question with him still was, How could he abandon his sinful pleasures, and forsake the way of his people? He was a heathen Indian, and a heathen he wanted to remain. He loved me, but as yet he hardly grasped the idea of love of God. He thought that in his wicked state God would not receive him, but that I could be His servant because I was sinless. I soon showed him that I was by no means sinless, that my natural desires were the same as his, and that morally there was no difference; although my sins might differ from his in kind, yet they were as much sin as his. This touch of a common nature appealed to him, and he began to see that the Saviour who could save me could save him too.

Kyemap to a certain extent wished that he could hate his sins in order that he might be my friend, but his love for God was not strong enough to induce him to entirely break away from his habits and follow a purer life. He gave up some of his evil ways, however, but still practised witchcraft, not because he believed in it, for he had lost much of his faith in these things, but because he did not like to be singular and marked out as separate from his people.

As our influence over Kyemap continued to grow his brother Manuel strongly objected, and caused us much trouble by his hostility. In 1894 I took Kyemap with me to Concepcion, and while there persuaded him to have his photograph taken. He was the first Indian, to my knowledge, who gave his consent to be photographed. He showed nervousness, it is true, and I had to stand by him. On my return to the interior we pinned up a copy of his photo on the rough door of our little hut. Manuel in his rage tried to destroy it, alleging that I had stolen the soul of his

brother, and that thus I was enabled to rule him and influence him at will.

In those days the Indians regarded the camera with superstitious fear, which serves to show what it must have cost Kyemap to stand before it. Three years later Professor Graham Kerr, of Glasgow University, who happened to be staying with us, was accused by the chief of the Paisiaptó clan of producing soreness in his (the chief's) eyes by taking a snapshot of him. He threatened to leave us and cause all his people to leave with him if we did not forbid that man to "fire out his little devils" at them.

I always found that Kyemap, in spite of his many faults, was ready to stand by me in time of difficulty, even if by so doing he offended his people. I have had numerous opportunities of testing his friendship. Often when I had occasion to make an all-night journey through forest and over plain, and when no other Indian would volunteer to accompany me, Kyemap was always ready, although he had the same ghostly fears in the darkness as his fellows. In positions of difficulty, when every nerve and muscle had to be strained, he again led; and in times of danger to myself, he never failed me. When my life was threatened by his companions, owing to my having been supposed to have held communication with the soul of a dead man at whose funeral I had recently taken part, Kyemap did his best to make excuses for me. On another occasion, when I was endeavouring against great odds to save an infant which the Indians by their law intended burying alive with its dead mother, Kyemap did all he could to help me. He was undoubtedly genuinely attached to me, and when the report of my murder, in December, 1897, reached the mission-station, he and his brother Manuel (until then one of our most obstinate opponents) caught their horses, midnight though it was, and set out to search for me, and to wreak vengeance on the

murderer, who happened to be their own cousin and play-fellow from childhood.

When Kyemap found me on Christmas Day at the village of Mopaiyakteba, he at once constituted himself my nurse, lay alongside me under my mosquito-net, and watched me carefully all night, doing me many kind and gentle actions. This is the more significant, when it is remembered that I was practically in a dying condition ; yet he showed no fear (as did his companions) at being so near to me at night. There is no doubt that my attempted murder was the turning-point in his decision, and that it also arrested the attention of his brother Manuel and many others.

Kyemap now broke entirely away from heathenism, and in many ways sought to prove his sincerity to me. So creditable and consistent was the change in his life that in June, 1899, he was baptized, and at once began to teach openly and preach the Gospel to his brethren. It is true that his knowledge was limited, and that he had many failings ; but he was nevertheless a sincere and true Christian, and tried to live up to his light.

His new attitude brought him into disfavour with many of his people, and he had to endure much sneering and persecution, which were just as trying under his special circumstances as more severe martyrdom would have been to many others. He sought out his companions, and tried to win them, too, but for some time his lot was hard and lonely.

Philip, as he was now called, was always impulsive, and at times given to act thoughtlessly. On one occasion, when addressing the people on the subject of witchcraft, he became angry and threatened to get the better-minded people to combine and drive out those who still practised heathen rites, and compel them to settle in a distant part of the country. He meant well, but his zeal was greater than his knowledge.

He has taken a leading part in the development of his

people and the native Church, of which he is now a communicant. He is chief of the Indian police force, and, in addition to a shop of his own, he has a bank investment which brings him in some \$20 (Paraguayan) a month. He is always ready to adopt any European method likely to benefit his people, but is an Indian still, and is proud of the fact. He was the first to oppose infanticide, and to-day, although quite a young man, he has a family of six children, all living.

It would be well if those who doubt the efficacy of missions could study a case like that of Philip, and see for themselves the great changes that are taking place in the hearts of the heathen. If the Lengua-Mascoy become a civilized and Christian nation of any power, the name of Philip will become historic, and will be for ever handed down to his country's posterity.

## CHAPTER IV

### STRUGGLING UPWARD

LIKE Israel of old, struggling upward, under the guiding Hand of the Spirit of the Almighty, towards purity of faith and holiness of life, out of the spiritual darkness in which they dwelt, guided with little more light than the surrounding nations, in company with whom they had in the dim past departed from the purer and truer ideals of the world's grey fathers, the Lengua-Mascoy infant Church groped its way onwards through the darkness of animism to the clear light of Christian revelation.

There is undoubted evidence that far back in their history the religious conceptions of these people were of a nobler and higher standard than that which we found among them. I am convinced, after careful study of their religious thought, that their traditions point back to a time when they worshipped the Supreme Author of Life and Light, under the image of the sun and other heavenly bodies; and that such symbolism no more indicates an original paganism than does the Christian reference to the Saviour of Mankind as the Sun of Righteousness, or an expression such as "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." With Christianity, as well as with all other religions, the tendency is to degenerate, and for the instinct of fallen man to reveal itself in the worship of the creature rather than the Creator; and were it not for the timely and Heaven-sent advent of prophets, purifying and redirecting the thoughts and hearts of men to the



Truth, the world would lapse into sinful and material night. In the Middle Ages such a revival was granted to Christendom by the celestial light of the Reformation purifying the Church from self-worship and corruption.

In order to explain more fully the darkness of heathenism which existed among the Lengua-Mascoy on our arrival, and which is still prevalent outside the mission's sphere of influence, I will enumerate some of the superstitions and evils which permit of discussion in detail. The grosser forms must of necessity be omitted owing to their nature. It must be left to the reader to form his own judgment as to the strain the natives experienced in struggling to break away from the beliefs which prompted their evil customs, and which through long practice had become almost a part of themselves.

Witchcraft, in its many forms, had a firm hold of the people, and it is no wonder that our young Christians, being few in number, partially educated, and still living in the midst of heathenism, should find it difficult all at once to abandon rites and beliefs in which their race was steeped. To their credit these early converts ceased entirely, after their baptism, to practise or take part in heathen ceremonies. Only two have lapsed, and that since Christianity became dominant and fashionable. But they found it much more difficult to free their minds from superstitious fears. It was this weakness in particular that we had to combat in the early Church.

The belief in ghosts, omens, and dreams was universal, and of such a nature as to affect their whole line of conduct in no slight degree. When we remember that similar superstitious ideas are still prevalent among, and influence, people belonging to highly civilized nations with centuries of Christianity behind them, and extensive religious and scientific literature at their command, can we wonder at these recently won children of nature clinging to their superstitions in spite of



### AN INDIAN BABY GIRL

The horses in the background are seeking shelter near the houses from horse flies.



### ONCE A WITCH DOCTOR, NOW A CHRISTIAN

Manual and his little daughter. He was formerly a Witch Doctor, but is now a Christian and Justice of the Peace in the Indian settlement.



their mental and spiritual effort to ignore them? We smile when anecdotes are related concerning their dread of such, meanwhile forgetting that many of us are still under the thralldom of similar primitive ignorance.

Superstitious fears in connection with death have perhaps the strongest hold over the Chaco peoples. Their custom is to bury the dead at as great a distance as possible from their place of encampment, and to destroy and vacate their village immediately after the burial. Their reasons for so doing are to escape the sinister attentions of the souls of the departed, who are believed to wander for a time about their old haunts.

On one occasion, after a death had occurred, I made a special effort to persuade the people not to burn and abandon their village. They at length consented, but one man in particular, the witch-doctor of the party, took special precautions in case of any serious results. He did not wish to oppose me, and yet was unwilling to offend his people. He therefore adopted a novel plan by which he took up a neutral position, and at the same time allayed his fears with regard to the ghost. Shortly before the occasion in question he had built quite a superior hut with a small opening on one side to serve as a door. The deceased had known this hut well, and in order to puzzle his ghost it was necessary to make considerable alterations in view of its expected visit. The old wizard first blocked up the entrance, giving it the appearance of a solid wall, and then made a small opening on the opposite side instead. He afterwards explained to me that by this ruse the ghost would be nonplussed, when looking for the entrance, to find it a solid wall. This witch-doctor was a type of many other Indians we had at that time to deal with; since he could not shake off his superstitious fears, and yet was anxious to remain on friendly terms with the mission party, he assumed an attitude of compromise.

We naturally found it impossible to establish a permanent

mission-station while this dread held the people, and it was not until Christian teaching began to take effect that we in a measure overcame this awkward custom.

As a result of the teaching which they had received, and thanks to their new conceptions of death and a future life, the Christians showed no fear of such ghostly visitants, and did not allow themselves to be moved by their reported appearances. They have not only ceased to abandon their villages, but continue to live contentedly in the very houses in which deaths have taken place, and that, too, in spite of the assertions of their non-Christian relatives that strange lights and ghostly appearances have been seen in the vicinity of their habitations. Our Christians will now willingly travel and sleep alone in the wilderness, even in places reputed to be haunted, but formerly they were afraid to travel by night, except in large companies, owing not to fear of snake-bite or of attack by wild animals, but from fear of the supernatural.

The Chaco is a weird and lonely land, and it is not surprising that at night-time creepy feelings are experienced by the lonely traveller. Even a European is so affected to no small extent, especially perhaps after witnessing the eerie circumstances attending a native death and burial.

Some nine years ago a well-known and much-feared witch-doctor died of snake-bite, not far from one of our mission-stations, known as the Pass. He refused every offer of his companions to endeavour to cure him, and the peculiar circumstances connected with his past life, death and burial so affected the Indian mind that the neighbourhood of his grave was reputed to be haunted by his dangerous spirit. On more than one occasion, while passing that district during the day, but towards sunset, Indians have asserted that they received mysterious blows from an invisible hand, and that even a bag which a man was carrying on his back was snatched from him and thrown to the ground. Strange sounds were reported to



be heard at night, and some asserted that weird sights had been seen. This particular place bore an evil reputation long before the death of this witch-doctor; and its peculiar position, lying as it did between the forest on the one hand and the reedy swamp on the other, rendered it a suitable place to which to attach such stories.

I do not suggest for a moment that credence should be given to them, but they are quoted in order to show the reader how justifiable, from an Indian point of view, would be his fear to pass that way alone and by night.

It is necessary to explain that strange things do happen in the Chaco, which naturally appear weird and ghostly to the Indian's unscientific mind. I remember on one occasion, during "siesta" time, while sleeping alone in my hut at Kiimesikthlapomap, feeling as it were a sharp, sudden blow on my thigh, which I afterwards discovered had left a mark as if someone had struck me with the open hand. Thinking that some Indian lad had been playing a trick on me, I at once made inquiries, but was told that no one had approached within five or six hundred yards of my house. On my telling the whole story the people looked grave, and several remarked that it must have been a devil who had struck me on my leg.

On another occasion, while travelling by steamer on the River Paraguay, I awoke feeling a severe pain in one of my eyes, and on looking in the glass I noticed a red mark on the surrounding parts, such as might have been caused by a blow. Application of iced water proved a remedy for this, and it soon disappeared.

While riding at night through a Chaco forest it is a common experience to meet with a blast of hot air, and a little farther on to pass through a correspondingly cold current. The case of the Indian referred to, who reported that his burden was mysteriously snatched from his back,

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can be explained by the passing of one of these air-currents. While he hurried along with his load his naked back would naturally become heated and would perspire. A sudden cold current striking it would cause him to shiver, and as he was in the neighbourhood of a place which was reputed to be haunted, his imagination no doubt worked upon his fears, with the result that he dropped his load, and attributed the cause to the vengeful hand of a pursuing spirit.

On a calm day without a breath of wind, it is not at all unusual to see a solitary palm-leaf moving rapidly to and fro as if by a human hand, all the other leaves on the tree being perfectly still.

These apparently strange occurrences can be attributed to small spiral columns of air, travelling quickly after the manner of a whirlwind, and to the cold current brought with them striking on the heated body or other object. These are known in Paraguay by an expression meaning "a blow of the air." To an Indian, however, such an explanation is beyond his comprehension, and it is only natural that the weirdness of these occurrences should stimulate his superstitious fears. It speaks volumes for the power of Christianity when it is stated that the Indian converts have been so able to overcome one of their strongest terrors that they have never hesitated to pass through districts reputed to be haunted, even when alone and in the ghostly hours of the early morning.

In common with us they strangely regard the howling of a dog as an omen of death, either for the owner or for one of his household. The cries of certain birds are interpreted as heralding visitors; the crow of the cock as denoting change of weather; the solar halo as a sign of war and distress; a comet as the harbinger of an epidemic; and a whirlwind as the passage of a spirit. Meteors foretell the death of a witch-doctor, being supposed to be the messengers

of justice come to slay him. A hen suffering from vertigo is held to be a warning of approaching death to the owner, unless it is immediately killed. It is considered a threat to the life of a person to attempt to tread upon his shadow; and a gross insult is conveyed by the mention by name of a deceased person, because such allusion is supposed to be followed by evil consequences.

Just as it is hard for some good Christians to feel easy and undisturbed in their minds when old-time omens present themselves to them, despite their efforts to dismiss them, so these young Christians, although taught to believe that the destinies of men are entirely in the hands of the Almighty, and that to be affected or influenced by such trivialities is unworthy of their high faith and calling, yet, having been reared and nurtured in such ideas, find it practically impossible to remain unaffected when such omens present themselves.

Dreams have perhaps a greater hold upon the people than any of their superstitions. To them they are the guiding hand of a supreme Providence, and it is considered rash in the extreme to ignore them. "There is more in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in our philosophy," and there is much in superstition and dreams which we can to a certain extent explain on scientific principles; yet much remains unaccounted for. The true believer, however, reposing his trust in God alone, need not be disturbed or influenced by such inexplicable, although at times strange and apparently wonderful, coincidences.

In the case of the Indian we have had ample opportunity in a number of instances to verify the strange fulfilment of dreams, and it is not to be wondered at that such a simple people on observing the same experience had their faith in them established. Even Christians find it very difficult to ignore them, especially when warnings which they received

in this manner have seemingly been verified in their own individual cases.

Kyemapapānko-ākyākye, one of the earliest converts, who to the present day has maintained such a real and consistent Christian life, and who is excelled by none in his loyalty to his Lord, was, nevertheless, for some time after his baptism affected by belief in dreams. He felt, however, that it was his duty as a Christian to ignore them. It was a severe struggle for him, the more so since, in his own experience, vivid warnings seemed to have been conveyed to him in dreams, many of which were eventually fulfilled. One or two instances will suffice. Being despatched one day with correspondence on a lonely road where he was compelled to sleep a night by himself, he exhibited some reluctance to start, and, after being questioned, stated that he had had a dream which seemed to warn him that on that journey he would receive an injury to his eyes. He mastered his fears, however, and obeyed orders. Strange to say that night, while gathering firewood, a twig grazed his eye and injured it severely. It is not at all improbable that, when alone in the darkness, he began to think and ponder over his dream, and thus preoccupied did not observe his usual caution. But it is very difficult to satisfy an Indian's mind with such an argument.

Another Christian Indian dreamt that he trod upon two rattlesnakes, and next day, while hunting, he actually did so.

Many instances such as the above could be cited, and so we need not be surprised at the influence which dreams exercise over the Indian's life.

These people are rendered unhappy and live in constant dread, not only of ghosts, omens, and dreams, but the whole force of witchcraft, coupled with a crude animism, lend terror to their hopeless lives, for their after-life is fraught with infinitely greater dread than even their present existence.

Most of their animals are believed to possess souls, and in all their actions they have to take this belief into account. The tired hunter returning home with the much-coveted body of an ostrich has to exercise great care lest he fall a victim to the enraged spirit of the bird whose life he has taken. Before killing it he carefully rubs his arrow-point with an odoriferous herb in order to appease the injured spirit, and on his way back he plucks a few of the breast feathers and drops them in heaps here and there. He supposes that the spirit of the bird, after the first surprise has passed, recovers itself and seeks its revenge on him. The bunches of feathers immediately arrest its attention, and with its usual zigzag course it makes its way from one to the other, stopping at each bunch to consider what has happened, and whether they are the whole of itself or not. By this decoy the hunter gains time, and gets a good start of the pursuing spirit. Once within the vicinity of the village he can rest in safety, as the spirit of the ostrich is supposed to be unable to follow him farther owing to its fear of the many dogs.

The spirits of dogs and horses, being the domestic animals most prized by Indians, are regarded with particular dread. A native will on no consideration kill either, even when they are severely injured and of no further use. To tread upon the bones of a dead horse is considered to be specially abhorrent.

Kyemapsithyo, before he was baptized, gave us some cause for anxiety as to whether he had relinquished his superstitious fears. One day while out with him alone, I was questioning him very closely as to the sincerity of his belief. He felt vexed at my apparent doubt of him, and, suddenly darting from my side, began dancing upon a heap of horse's bones. I went over to him, being puzzled at his strange conduct, and on inquiring the reason he told me that it was



proof that he had broken with heathenism, adding: "You know how seriously we regard such things."

Three years later I found him having an altercation with his wife. The reason of it was that she had professed a desire for baptism, and was in fact a candidate at the time, and yet she could not bring herself to eat some sweet potatoes of a singularly crooked form. Their belief is that the eating of them will injuriously affect the birth of children; and he was telling her by way of rebuke that another woman, also a candidate, had that very day dared to partake of broth made from the head of an animal which was also deemed to have evil effects on childbirth. The Christian Indian, knowing that such ideas were associated directly with witchcraft, naturally felt that they should cease to hold dominion over anyone who had accepted Christianity and its teaching.

The peculiar marks painted upon the faces, bodies, and limbs of both sexes are connected with objectionable matters, and are not merely adopted for the sake of ornament, as is popularly supposed. The Christian Indians feel no doubt about the necessity for abandoning such practices, and yet force of habit and the objection to being out of fashion is so strong with them that they only desist from the custom with difficulty and reluctance. It is true that, under their peculiar social condition, such markings are not altogether unadvisable, but it is impossible to enter into details about such matters in these pages.

Of their many feasts, the two most morally pernicious are the "Yanmana" and the "Wainkya," which are of a religious nature, held at the coming of age of girls and boys respectively, and attended with gross irregularities. The origin of such feasts was evidently not of an immoral nature; they arose out of the observance of a festive occasion, such as the coming out of a girl into society after her school-days, or the entrance upon the serious part of life when a boy

reaches manhood, which in certain circles is accompanied with rejoicing and definite social functions. The Christian Indians at first endeavoured to purify such feasts, and it is a pity in many respects that we did not succeed in helping them to do so; but the force of circumstance was too strong for us and them, and though for a time the converts still participated in these feasts, they ultimately felt with us that the moral danger was too great, so they were eventually abandoned.

The heathen strongly resented the spread of the new Faith, and did all they could to discourage the young converts. On one occasion the witch-doctors, boasting of their reputed power and the supposed efficacy of their charms, assured some of the Christians that they could not hold a successful hunt without recourse to their craft. They replied that the God whom they served would assist them in hunting, thus exhibiting a similar faith to that of the three young men of the captivity in Babylon under the despotism of Nebuchadnezzar. But after they had asserted their faith, they seemed to have some slight misgiving, so like wise Christians they betook themselves to prayer, and next day they sallied out with confidence to a part of the country not reputed to be well stocked with game. The result of their hunt proved to be phenomenal, and they returned rejoicing, and with no little pride. This circumstance had a subduing effect on the witch-doctors, and greatly encouraged the Christians.

Another remarkable incident occurred during a fierce prairie fire, while a few Christians were out hunting. One of their number became hemmed in by a belt of flame, and would have inevitably perished had not an unforeseen incident happened which liberated him. His companions, feeling that he was lost, were about to give way to despair when it occurred to them that there was just a hope that the All-powerful One of whom they had learnt might save him in

## 130      A REMARKABLE INCIDENT

response to their prayers. Almost immediately a travelling air-current, not unusual in the Chaco, crossed the circle of flame, and, extinguishing a portion of the fire, provided a path for him to escape. The reader may attribute the occurrence to natural causes, which to a certain extent was the case; but the way in which it happened, just at the right place and in the right time, made it appear as a direct intervention of Providence in answer to prayer.

## CHAPTER V

## CHURCH ORGANIZATION

IN the year 1898, after much patient preliminary work over a period of ten years from the foundation of the mission, we at length arrived at the decisive point in its history.

Although many of the Lengua-Mascoy had previously shown considerable interest in the instruction given them, and some few had evinced a decided inclination to accept and follow the principles set forth in the new Faith introduced among them, none had definitely and publicly offered to break from heathenism and adopt Christianity.

At the beginning of the second decade of our ministry among them, following upon a time of trial, danger, and anxiety, we were cheered to find two young men unreservedly express a desire to accept Christ as their Saviour. They, together with some others, entered earnestly upon a course of instruction; and the change in their lives was so manifest that there remained no doubt of their sincerity. Only the two mentioned, however, were specially prepared, after a public announcement had been made of their desire for the rite of baptism; and it was with thankful hearts that we accompanied them to the river station eighteen months later, to be admitted into the Church of God by Dr. Stirling, the first Bishop of the Falkland Islands. Kyemapsithyo and Kyemap-ăpănko-ăkyăkye were received as the first-fruits of the Lengua-Mascoy Church, taking the names of Philip and James respectively. Philip, the elder, was chiefly respon-

## 132 UNWELCOME DISTRACTIONS

sible for the leading of his younger relative to Christ, like his namesake of old; and the building which was used for services at the mission station of Waikthlatingmāngyalwa was appropriately dedicated to SS. Philip and James by the Ven. Archdeacon Shemield.

In these early days of the Church, sufficient advance had been made by many of the Indians to allow of the holding of more or less formal services, but we found it very difficult to insure their being reverently conducted. The people were by no means irreverent, for the Indian in his natural state is instinctively awed when brought into contact with spiritual things.

For many reasons it was not wise to enforce a kneeling posture during prayer. The Indian costume, both of the men and the women, did not lend itself to it, and as there was little in the way of seating accommodation, most of them chose to sit upon the mud floor of the church. Frequently in the course of a service, members of the congregation would walk out, or stand at the doorway. It was not uncommon to hear a woman called away to attend to her cooking or to meet a visitor on his arrival. We did not find it expedient to interfere with these and other irregularities, for the circumstances made it impossible to avoid all manner of distractions which are not experienced at home. A few of these might be mentioned with advantage in order to make the position clearer. The church room could boast of neither doors nor windows, but merely the empty openings. Consequently dogs, goats, sheep, and fowls followed their owners to church, and walked about. Mothers had no provision by which they could leave their babies in their huts, and therefore they brought them to the services. Mosquitoes and other insects were generally at their worst at sunset and sunrise, the usual and only practicable hours of service, and the continual slapping of half-naked bodies by the Indian



members of the congregation in their endeavours to cope with these pests, would, under other circumstances, have been ludicrous in the extreme. Even the interruption of a service owing to the presence of a venomous snake crawling in and out among naked feet and legs was not an infrequent occurrence.

The Indian being of a stolid disposition, and accustomed to such distractions in his everyday life, paid little heed to them, and his attention was not seriously diverted from the service. The difficulty which he experienced was of quite a different nature—namely, of concentrating his attention for any given length of time on some particular subject, whether a prayer, lesson, hymn, or sermon. His mind was not trained to formalities of any kind, and our experience was that his reverence tended to decrease somewhat by constant attendance at formal services. It would seem as if he was unable to bear the prolonged strain.

We did not restrict the natives to formal services, but, on the contrary, encouraged them to hold private meetings of their own; or, when they so desired, they had liberty to use the church building. We thought it unwise to intrude our official presence at such gatherings, feeling that Christian worship and prayer was not confined to any one locality, and that it was not at all necessary for an officer of the church to preside. Our presence acted as a restraint, and if persevered in would have damped their independent action. We impressed upon them that worship was the duty of all, and particularly private and family prayers. We were soon gratified by finding that prayer and instruction were being given in the outlying villages, and it was no unusual thing to see a few Indians make their way quietly and unostentatiously into the woods to commune with their Maker. We were well aware of the people's weaknesses, but good seed was being sown, and we felt confident that such could be left in the hands of God without our interference.

## 134 PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

After the baptism of the first candidates we made them members of our Church Council, and impressed upon them that since the Church thus founded amongst them was their own, they would eventually be required to govern without our aid; and that it was incumbent upon them to exercise great caution in adding to their number, as nothing could be more injurious to the progress of the Divine work than the admission of insincere members. We informed them that henceforth we would unite with them in examining and testing the candidates, and that only with their approval would we consent to admit any.

We recognized that the leaders of the Church had no right to refuse anyone who made an intelligent and apparently sincere confession of faith, but that in an infant Church among a heathen people it would be difficult to determine the actual value of such a confession. We therefore considered it folly to restrict judgment in such a case to any one particular officer, but that the combined opinion of several sincere Christians must tend to safety. For this reason we were the more anxious to secure the co-operation of the Indian believers, as they, knowing the lives of their people so much better than we could possibly do, would naturally be able to give wise counsel and efficient help. This system, furthermore, threw responsibility on those who were already Christians. They stood, as it were, as sponsors for the others, and in the early years of the Church, at any rate, they earnestly tried to direct aright the steps of their younger brethren. Following on the same lines, we committed those who were under probation to the care of the few baptized Christians.

Although it is allowable under certain circumstances to admit any who are baptized as adults to Holy Communion, we ordered that there should be a lapse of a year or two between their baptism and first communion, not because we

placed the one sacrament above the other, but to give time to the Indian to settle down, and also because we found that he was incapable of assimilating much instruction all at once. Preparation for baptism fully taxed his powers. By means of this interval we were enabled to gradually prepare the candidates and teach them the full significance of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Before being admitted to confirmation the candidates were again tested by the Church Council of natives and missionaries, in order that if any irregularity was found in their lives they might be kept back until such time as they should prove fitter. We had to be careful lest they should conceive the Lord's Supper to be some particular charm, as they were naturally given to seek an easy way to righteousness. Our point was to impress upon them that the Christian life was a struggle, and that only those could succeed who combined to fight manfully and to progress in the spiritual course with full faith in Christ as their Saviour, relying upon God-given strength.

It was our constant aim to keep man in the background, and to lead the Indian to direct contact with his Lord. Since it was necessary, in order to prevent abuses, to inquire very carefully into the conduct of the natives, and to insist upon confession of evil done, we did this publicly, so that none should feel encouraged to lean upon any one of us, or to conceive that any but God could forgive them.

We had a further motive for guarding against possible evil. The adjacent countries acknowledged the faith of the Church of Rome, and we knew that our people must in time come into contact with them. We therefore felt it our duty so to teach them and organize their Church as to prevent their falling into what we considered the errors of that section of the Christian Church.

Having always in view the establishment of a self-supporting

and self-expanding native organization on purely native lines, as soon as it was possible we insisted upon their bearing all necessary expenses which they were in a position to defray. These included the maintenance of orphans, the sick and aged, church building and upkeep. Those who were able were required to read the lessons in church, and those whom we considered fit to profitably address their fellows at the regular services were carefully prepared by us beforehand, the way being thus paved for what we hoped might eventually become a native ministry.

We made extensive use of Indians as agents to bring in others from the outside villages, that they might undergo more careful instruction than was possible during itinerating tours; and we impressed upon all Christians, both men and women, the absolute duty of passing on the Gospel message to all with whom they came in contact. This was, perhaps, the greatest factor in the formation of the infant Church.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONNECTING LINKS

UP to the time of the baptism of Philip and James in 1898, the work of founding the Church had rested entirely with the laity; but at this period the Rev. T. B. R. Westgate arrived in the field as the first clergyman to be attached to the mission.

The work had now advanced sufficiently far to warrant the carrying out of certain plans which had been formed for extension. A mission was therefore established to the Suhin Indians in the west, and Mr. A. Pride was given charge of the new enterprise. This branch of the mission was carried on until the year 1903, when the growing needs of the infant Church at Waikthlatingmängyalwa made it necessary to concentrate all our efforts at that centre. Mr. Pride was therefore recalled, and the Suhin station abandoned.

Although no direct results were visible from our efforts in that direction, friendly relations were established, some of the language was acquired, and many Christian truths were disseminated. The most profitable indirect result of the Suhin mission was the greater hold we obtained over the Lengua-Mascoy living on the border, to whom constant and valuable instruction was imparted, and a sub-station was also established at Paisiam-yalwa, about half-way to the Suhin country.

The reported murder of the explorer Ibarretta necessitated our sending an expedition composed of some of our trained



Indians under Mr. Pride and a companion in search of him, as for some time it was doubtful whether he was actually killed or being held a captive by the Aii\* Indians—a tribe lying to the west-south-west on the Pilcomayo River. The search was unavailing, but some valuable information was obtained about the country and the people.

The growing needs of the spiritual movement now fairly afoot, together with the existence of public services and organized school-work, hastened the translating and printing of educational books, as well as a simple service form and portions of the Scriptures. Years had been spent in a careful study of the language, but even so, the translation of the Scriptures would have been a difficult work were it not for the help obtained from such Indians as had been thoroughly taught the simple Gospel truths, and were therefore in a position to assist in furnishing the right phraseology for such publications.

At the close of the year 1900 we presented three more young men for baptism. These were received into the Church by the Rev. E. P. Cachemaille, Clerical Secretary of the Society, who happened to be on a visit to the mission.

For some time past the gradual development of a bitter feeling against the spread of the new Faith had been noticeable among some of the heathen, led by the witch-doctors. It culminated immediately after the reception of these three lads. The day after their baptism all three fell ill; two recovered, but the one named Andrew grew rapidly worse and eventually died. Although we can bring forward no actual proof, the circumstances point to the supposition that they were poisoned by the witch-doctors with a view to intimidating others from taking part in the new movement. The wizards' own allegation that we were endangering the lives of the people by administering our rites seems to confirm

\* The Aii are a branch of the Tobas.

our suspicions. When the death of Andrew was imminent, a serious disturbance took place in the village. The forces of heathenism ranged themselves with great bitterness and menace against the missionaries and all who sided with them. This revolt might have been fraught with serious consequences, but matters providentially quieted down, and opinion suddenly changed in our favour.

All of the leaders who took part in this, the final open and hostile opposition to Christianity, either became Christians or died during the next few years. Since this event the Christian Church and its partial adherents have formed the leading force in the country, while heathenism has steadily declined and heathen clans rapidly become disintegrated.

We may justly look upon this outburst as the death-struggle of organized witchcraft. It is true that attempts have been made since then to revive the power of heathenism, but up to the present they have proved ineffective and of comparatively little consequence. We have no longer to fear the forces of heathenism pure and simple, but rather Christian formalism or complete indifference.

Christianity and civilization having practically triumphed, there followed a general movement in the direction of progress, not only at Waikthlatingmängyalwa, but throughout all the surrounding villages. The Christians were full of earnestness and zeal, and at times it was hard to hold them in. They looked for the conversion of the whole nation, and the speedy extinction of heathenism. One of them, when addressing his people, prophesied that during the present generation witchcraft would disappear. If the Lengua-Mascoy Church is handled wisely, and the native teachers are encouraged to carry out the evangelization of their own people, there is no reason why his prophecy should not be fulfilled. Even now witchcraft is greatly discredited, and few care to own that they practise such things.

It must not be thought, however, that the change of tone and desire to advance were all towards spirituality. It was more a movement among the many to improve their social position, and to cast off their more childish superstitions and customs. We perceived, however, that this desire, if properly guided, could be made to promote not only the temporal welfare of the people, but also the spread of Christianity.

Progress was so rapid that we were forced to seek new outlets for the energies and ambitions of the Indians. In order to enable the people to obtain profitable work and industrial training, and thus to localize them at the mission-stations, where they could be more efficiently dealt with, the Paraguayan Chaco Indian Association was founded with a capital of £1,300, and was established on the Riacho Negro fifty miles inland from the River Paraguay, on a piece of land kindly lent to us by the firm of Gibson Brothers of Buenos Aires, who are large landowners in the Chaco.

At the time of the inauguration of this enterprise, a severe epidemic of measles broke out among the Indians, and there were numerous deaths in the outlying villages. The full extent of the mortality could not be ascertained, but in the districts where it was rampant the population was greatly reduced, hundreds being known to have died. We only lost seven of those under the care of the mission, although it was the cold season, and we had no adequate shelters in which to receive them.

The members of the staff engaged in ministering to the sick behaved with unassuming heroism. It was one of those incidents in missionary life which are seldom brought before the knowledge of the public. They willingly gave up their limited supply of clothing, bedding, and food to the sufferers, and worked all day, attending to their ordinary duties, and in providing for the necessities of the sick, while at night they took their turn at nursing.

During this epidemic a sick lad, who had been prepared for baptism, and who was considered fully qualified, was baptized at his own request, as his life was despaired of. The rite took place at midnight, and although he was not expected to live an hour, before morning he had greatly improved, and eventually recovered. He is now a useful and reliable member of the Church.

Towards the latter end of the same year, 1901, a most important event in the mission's history took place—the baptism of two men, one a former witch-doctor, and the first to leave his profession to join the Church of Christ. He had, moreover, been a bitter opponent of the Gospel. So antagonistic was he, that we had seriously considered banishing him from our neighbourhood. He was the elder brother of Philip, who had all along maintained that he was by no means a hopeless case, even when he was most troublesome, and was deliberately planning to upset our work and estrange the people from us. Philip also assured us that when his brother did turn from his evil ways, he would become a true servant of God. His words have been amply verified, for Manuel, as he is called, has not only proved a valuable help in translational work, but has remained to the present day a quiet and consistent Christian, and has always brought his natural powers and authority to bear on the side of good. He has been the means of winning others to the Christian Faith, and the change of life in this man is one of the greatest triumphs of the mission.

Bishop Every, Dr. Stirling's successor in the episcopate, visited the mission in October, 1902, and we presented to him eight Indian adults and two children for baptism. There were many others at the time either prepared or under probation, but as the Rev. P. R. Turner was shortly expected to join the mission, it was considered best to give them the benefit of further trial and instruction. They were baptized



## 142 AN UNSUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT

some time later. Thus the first stage of the Christian Church in the Chaco was reached with a membership roll of about fifty persons.

Some few months after Mr. Turner's arrival a plague of smallpox scourged the country, in some cases decimating whole villages. But the Indians actually under the care of the mission escaped entirely, with the exception of those at Paisiamyalwa. In spite of these two epidemics the Indians were by no means discouraged, and the popularity of the mission steadily grew.

Ever since the foundation of the Church, with its centre of life at Waikthlatingmängyalwa, the constant contact of the young Christians with heathenism, which still existed to a great extent among those who had settled with us there, caused us much misgiving. In 1904 we attempted the separation of the two opposing forces; this attempt, however, was doomed to failure. In order to give this policy an opportunity we founded the village of Näktetingma, about a league to the south-east of Waikthlatingmängyalwa. A big swamp lay between them, and our idea was to locate the young Church at Näktetingma, and so provide a more suitable environment for its development, retaining Waikthlatingmängyalwa as a mission centre for the heathen only. We found, however, that the two classes of Indians would not remain separate. They soon came to look upon Näktetingma as the main centre, and accordingly flocked thither. Numbers came in and showed an inclination to settle with us. We afterwards perceived that it was better to let the Christians grow up amidst the evil influences of heathenism, and to struggle and fight against them rather than to endeavour to rear them in a nursery.

As the forest tree grows and expands buffeted and often injured by the tempestuous winds, so the Church in the Chaco was destined to suffer many adversities; in the process



of growing some of the weaker saplings were blown down, and even the stronger trees did not remain unscathed. We, in common with others in like circumstances, had to gain our experience through the many mistakes which we acknowledge having committed, the greatest of which consisted in expecting too rapid a growth among the converts, and in endeavouring to change too hastily that which was comparatively harmless in their system of life. We were afraid to allow the Indians to develop in a natural way, and to let Christianity gradually permeate the whole mass of heathenism by a slow upward movement. In the early days of the infant Church we in many respects followed this wiser plan, but later, feeling encouraged by our successes and stimulated by apparent prosperity, we sought too eagerly to keep a hold upon what we had gained, and to some extent hindered the expansion of our work. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

## CHAPTER VII

### WIDESPREAD INFLUENCE

To bring the heart of the Indian into touch with his God and into obedience to His revealed will was the object of our presence among them. We did not expect, nor had we any reason to hope, for the conversion of the people as a nation to real Christianity. Our commission was to bear the message of the Gospel to them, and to take care that they were left with no excuse for rejecting it. God alone could know what the results would be. We felt sure from the remarkable way in which He had led us to this people, and the measure of success with which He had blessed our efforts, that He in His infinite knowledge knew that there were those living in that generation who would accept the offer of salvation when it was presented to them.

We were sowers and builders, and we thought not only of the Indians with whom we came into contact, but also of those unborn, and our work, therefore, was fraught with a double responsibility—in the first place to win those who would be won, and in the second place to prepare the way for those who were to come after, in order that they might, on their advent, have the advantages of a purer state of life, better opportunities, and more enlightened knowledge. There are manifest advantages in being born in a nominally Christian and civilized land, and we determined to aim at securing this condition for the future generations of Indians.

The influence of the mission spread far and wide,

subduing to a great extent the harsher forms of heathenism, modifying customs, changing the whole tone of the people—in fact, producing a moral and social revolution.

To those who only estimate our work by the few converts we obtained—stumbling as they were with much sincerity, in spite of frequent falls, towards the higher ideal—we may not have appeared to have accomplished much; but when the wider scope of our influence has been studied, no unprejudiced person will hold that we had worked in vain.

Sixteen years had now passed since the mission began, and the Gospel had been preached throughout the Lengua-Mascoy villages, either directly by ourselves or indirectly through the Indians, who, true to their innate desire to carry news, had propagated it, quite apart from any desire to serve God or to spread our Faith. It was no uncommon thing to find Indians in remote villages praying of their own accord to the God of whom they had heard. It is not altogether to be wondered at that their lives were not appreciably changed as far as spiritual matters were concerned, but it is evident that they showed a decided interest in, and a desire to know more about, Christianity.

It would be difficult to find Indians who are entirely ignorant of the rudimentary parts of our teaching, which indicates that very substantial work had been done. The result of this sowing of the seed depended upon the future purity and earnestness of the native Church, and the methods pursued by its leaders.

Apart from direct spiritual influence, great changes were wrought. Public opinion on such questions as infanticide, drunkenness, immorality, and indecency, began to take a higher tone. Only those who knew the people when as yet the darkness of heathenism reigned supreme over them can fully appreciate the change that has taken place in outward appearance.

Infanticide had received a considerable check. Not that it had been by any means entirely abandoned, but the people had begun to look upon it with shame, and sought to keep such crimes secret, and to boast whenever they could show proof that they had renounced it.

I remember visiting a village in the far interior, where formerly it was rare to see an infant, and where the people not long previously had unblushingly acknowledged that they not only killed numbers of their children, but angrily asserted that they had no intention of giving up the practice. But on this occasion the chief beckoned to me, and on going to the place indicated he proudly showed me seven young women marshalled in line, each with an infant in her arms, and looking highly gratified. This was solely the result of Christian influence.

Drunkenness, formerly universal among adult men at feasts, soon began to be looked upon as a disgrace, although it continued to be indulged in. From the very commencement of the mission no cases of intemperance, or, in fact, of partaking of alcoholic drink, were ever met with on our stations. We had strongly condemned this vice, and never settled in any place until the people had assured us that no strong drink would be used by them, and they faithfully kept their promises. Wherever we or the Christian Indians went the people postponed their drinking-feasts, and it was a common thing for them to hide their namuks (vats scooped out of the bottle-tree) in the forest if they had any suspicion that they might be visited, as they felt ashamed to be seen giving way to such debauchery.

On one occasion, while travelling towards the Monte Lindo River, I happened to call at a village in the early afternoon. My approach having been notified, I was surprised to find only the chief and a very few of his people in the village. His anxiety in advising me to hasten my journey aroused my

suspicious, which were not allayed by my hearing muffled sounds in a wood near by. I soon discovered the cause of this unusual behaviour and how the mutterings from the forest were to be accounted for. They had been holding a drunken orgie, and the chief, hearing of my approach, had had his inebriated companions removed out of sight; the women and few sober men were endeavouring to stifle their singing by gagging them with blankets. Sin is sin wherever it is found, but there is always hope for those who feel ashamed of their evil-doing, even if not from the highest motives.

Judged by our standard, the Indians in their heathen state cannot be considered very moral, but under the influence of Christian teaching and the better tone adopted by our adherents the grosser evils began to arrest the attention of the mass. Self-respect began to assert itself, and vices which were formerly practised openly began to be considered improper, and were only indulged in secretly wherever the new opinions were sufficiently strong.

Following upon this change of view, a better idea of decency naturally took hold of the people, and as is the case of all other nations, a certain form of modesty and propriety was adopted and esteemed necessary, in spite of the fact that they still clung to the actual sins, and did not scruple to indulge in them whenever they could without coming under the notice of public opinion.

At an early period we enforced the necessity of maintaining the marriage relationship for life, which, although general, was not always observed. The well-disposed Indians readily agreed to the lifelong tie, but they did not feel bound to obey the rules of fidelity. Understanding as we do the many customs associated with their married life, we are not surprised or discouraged at their attitude, and we realize that it will take time before stricter habits become general. The



strength of a nation lies in its family life, and this Christianity is rapidly improving. Many Indians possess increased families, and the care and maintenance of the children is gradually strengthening the marriage relationship.

Desire for privacy is increasing, and where formerly the people dwelt in one long, open shelter, they are now adopting separate habitations. This, on the whole, tends to a higher moral tone, but wherever immoral desire prevails, this privacy affords an easier covering for the sin than was formerly the case in the communal life.

The possession of a number of children prevents easy movement from one place to another, and consequently the tendency is to abandon the nomadic life, and to take to more settled ways. The women being fully occupied with their families are less able to engage in outdoor occupations ; more frugality and foresight become necessary to provide for the needs of the household, and thus the position of the women, although in some respects more restricted and burdensome, is decidedly improved.

It has already been remarked that the Indians, despite their practice of infanticide, are extremely fond of their children, and the men with large families now evince an inclination to spend their leisure time in their homes, instead of as formerly in seeking diversion in doubtful ways. When unrestricted and unencumbered they spent much of their time in visiting other villages and partaking in feasts.

These forms of festivity are many, and some of them are by no means intrinsically wrong ; but their long duration, often extending to six or even eight weeks, wasted so much of their time, that it was impossible for the people to develop, unless they gave more attention to the serious duties of life. We did not attempt to abolish these feasts, but were content to gradually restrict them on the stations. We foresaw that as the people's tastes became modified and their intelligence



### GIRLS IRONING

This art they have learned to do very creditably.



increased, such childish amusements would not satisfy them for long, and so we determined to leave the final abandonment of them to time.

The sense of superiority felt by the mission Indians hastened this relinquishment rather sooner than was desirable, because the outside heathen, not keeping pace with them, still clung to the old merrymakings, and consequently missed them when visiting the mission. They also felt the superior tone adopted by the station Indians, which resulted in breaking that bond of sympathy and fraternity which it is so necessary to maintain for the welfare of the work.

A settled community cannot exist without definite occupations. Co-operation becomes increasingly imperative, and one trade leads to another. Wants are multiplied, and the standard of comfort is raised. Wherever men congregate in numbers with varying interests, a measure of law and order also becomes necessary. The people felt the obligation of engaging more fully in agricultural pursuits, and of increasing their stock of domestic animals. Their desire for better and more permanent dwellings, and the many other adjuncts of civilized life, compelled us to instruct them in arts and industries of which they were formerly ignorant.

They began to realize that there was a future before them, and that their children could attain to a higher standard than was possible in their wild life, and so where formerly we had met with great difficulty in establishing schools, we now began to have the support of the people upon whom the advantages of education were beginning to dawn.

The more the people progressed, the greater were the burdens laid upon us. Wants hitherto not known began to make themselves felt, and where formerly our transport service had been comparatively small, since we had to provide only for our own needs, we had now to supply the increasing demands of the people. All this occupied much of our time,

but as it served to help forward the object of our mission, we gladly adapted ourselves to the new conditions.

The industrial development necessitated a more definite organization, and enforced a certain regularity in carrying on the government of the stations. Men were told off to specific duties, and all were required to bear their part. The station bell was rung at early dawn to assemble the workers to morning prayers and their duties for the day; it rang again at noon for the customary rest during the heat, and at sunset for evening prayer and the cessation of labour.

No work was paid for except that for which we were personally responsible, but we willingly rendered our assistance to all who required it in the shape of advice and help in their occupations. Evil-doers and those who transgressed against the common weal were severely censured, and we gradually instilled into the people the necessity of enforcing simple laws and regulations.

We inculcated the observance of the Sunday, and found no great difficulty in so doing. The idea of a day of rest on religious grounds rapidly spread throughout the country. Many men adopted the novel plan of marking their stick-calendars\* with red paint on every seventh day in order not to forget the Sundays. We had more difficulty, it must be confessed, in persuading the people to observe six days of toil. The Saturday was always reserved for hunting and fishing, so that a supply of food might be obtained to tide them over till the Monday.

Many minor evil customs prevalent in their heathen state began to gradually give way before the spread of new ideas and enlightenment. Men and women formerly wore their hair long, but it soon became customary for the men to cut

\* Sticks carried by travelling Indians, on which they record the number of days spent on a journey; the lapse of time before the celebration of a feast, and other events, by means of a series of notches.



their hair, while the women prided themselves upon the lengthening of their tresses. A gambling game, called "Hăstawa," at which the men would sometimes spend whole days, and risk their most valuable possessions, proved such a hindrance to progress, apart from being an undoubted evil, that we took every possible means to suppress it. It soon began to die out, and to-day it is rarely seen.

Thus in many ways the direct and indirect influence of the infant Church and of her leaders began to gradually leaven the whole nation, till a higher standard of life prevailed. Indecent conduct and conversation, which the heathen had formerly indulged in without any sense of shame, now began to be abandoned, or at any rate to be regarded with disapproval. A pleasure-loving, self-gratifying, and ease-seeking people now adopted a life of industry, regularity, and discipline. From out of an unorganized mass of heathenism, wherein every man did what seemed good in his own eyes, emerged respect for a higher life and a system of law and order. Once degenerate man realized that he was placed in this world for a purpose, he set out to fulfil his destiny, albeit timidly and with childlike restrictedness of view.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE "WHITE PARTRIDGES"

A MOST striking example of the widespread influence of the Chaco infant Church is afforded in the case of a Lengua-Mascoy clan known as the Mopai-senhiks, or "White Partridges." Their village, situated some 150 miles from Waikthlatingmängyalwa, had never been visited by any of the staff except on one occasion, and that solely for the purposes of exploration. What news of the mission and its teaching had reached them had been carried to them by Indians only. In the year 1900 a large party of Mopai-senhiks, led by their chief, visited the mission with feathers and skins for trading purposes, and to see and hear for themselves some of the strange things they had been told of.

Up to this time we had never succeeded in persuading an Indian girl to remain with us apart from her relatives, but on this occasion the young daughter of the chief of the "White Partridges" consented to remain, and her parents made no objection to her doing so. Seeing that she came from such a distance, and that her people were returning to their country, this was a great triumph. She proved to be a girl of strong character, and for some months was so troublesome in her behaviour that we feared she would not settle down to her new conditions and surroundings. In time, however, she became more tractable, and evinced no desire to leave us. Her people made frequent visits to the station to inquire after her welfare, and in course of time her

father and mother came to reside with us, which was what we had hoped for and partly expected. Eventually other members of her clan permanently settled with us.

The chief's daughter possessed intelligence above the ordinary, and by her willingness to learn she soon became one of our most useful women—so much so that in a few years she was capable of doing ordinary housework and cooking. But what encouraged us most was that she showed an unmistakable desire to become a Christian, and was eventually admitted into the full fellowship of the Church as the first-fruits of the Lengua-Mascoy women, being baptized with the name of Celia.

She evinced more strongly than any other of her sex a keen and genuine interest in the welfare of her people, and a desire to support all that was good, not because it was expedient, but because it was right. She showed the true practical Christian spirit in earnestly seeking to win her own family for Christ, and with such good result that already some twelve of them have been baptized, while all have forsaken heathenism and are practically Christians, some twenty-five being now stationed on the garden settlement of Mākthlawaiya.

Celia did not care to be interfered with or supervised in her work as housekeeper. She was keen to learn new things, but when she considered that she had mastered them she liked to be left a free hand. What she was always striving after was simply, like a well-trained servant, to receive her orders and then to be left to carry them out. This was a very different attitude from that of the other women, who needed constant supervision and to be told the same duties day by day, and even then seldom performed them with any regularity or correctness. She was fond of imitating the manners of the English women on the station, and talking with a great air of gravity. At other times she wore a

worried and busy look, as if her household responsibilities were great.

One little incident relative to her duties as housekeeper will throw some light on her character. On the occasion in question she was upset for some reason, and had prepared the dinner very badly; the soup was burnt, the dishes not clean—in fact, nothing was satisfactory. On being upbraided for her inattention to her work she became sulky, and at length remarked: “You are not satisfied with my work; I will go into the forest, seek out a deadly snake, and allow it to kill me. When I am dead you will be sorry and will miss me.” The only answer she received was: “Go quickly and do as you say. When you are bitten you will be sorry; when you are dying you will miss us.” She began to see that she had failed in her attempt to cover her misconduct by tragic talk. She looked glum, and said nothing for a time; then fully realizing that she had been outwitted, she burst into laughter and went about her duties cheerfully.

Unlike most of the Indian women, Celia thoroughly enjoyed a serious and comparatively intellectual conversation with any of the missionaries. Considering her lack of training and advantages, she was gifted with very fair reasoning powers, and showed a great desire to see the outside world. She was certainly the most advanced Lengua-Mascoy woman of her day, and realized more fully than any other the possibility of her sex and race developing and taking a place in the world. She was one of the only three Indians whom I ever heard express any appreciation of the beauties of nature. When it was remarked to her one day how much better circumstanced she was in living at the mission-station than she would have been had she remained in her own village, she replied that although Waikthlatingmängyalwa had undoubted advantages, still the natural surroundings were nothing to compare with those of her birthplace. She

spoke of the dark forest surrounding the small open plain in which her village was situated, the flowering cactus and other plants that lent beauty to the scene, and in general the superior picturesqueness of purely native life in comparison with the more practical surroundings of the station.

She was invariably on the side of the missionaries when any dispute arose, and to the very last she made every possible effort to try and persuade the peoples of the north to come under the influence of the mission. Like all Indians, she was extremely attached to her family, but especially to her parents and her brother Palwa.

Her father was every inch a chief, and owing to his extensive travels in the Indian country he was always full of interesting information. In common with most other savages, he coveted any article of European clothing, and an amusing incident happened one day after he had been presented with an old silk hat, which he prized very highly. He took the utmost care of it, continually polishing it, and always placing it in a position of honour in his hut. His daughter, to tease him, would sometimes hide this hat, upon which the old man would create a great disturbance; but on the recovery of his treasure, he would instantly resume his usual happy and pleasant manner, apparently enjoying the joke played upon him. Shortly after he had acquired this new head-dress we were cutting a new road, and in view of the length of time it would take to complete, we had built a small hut in which to secure our supplies against the weather. One afternoon a violent thunderstorm swept over our encampment, and the Indians were without any shelter, the little hut being only sufficient for ourselves and a few of the women and children. Celia's father immediately thought of his top-hat, and came to the hut looking very sad and worried, begging to be allowed to put it under cover. For himself, he was content to stay outside in the rain, but he could not bear the thought



of his hat being spoilt. It was a comical sight to see him walking in the Indian file on his way to church with only his blanket round his waist, adorned in paint and feathers, but the silk hat on his head, affording a strange contrast with his half-naked body and primitive garb. He took it off at the church door with the greatest possible care, and placed it upon a post outside, but in full view of his watchful eye.

He is to-day one of the staunchest supporters of the mission, and a Christian of no mean standing, yet he was quite fifty-five years of age when he cut himself off from his old life and was baptized.

His son Palwa was, on his first arrival among us, one of the most unpromising-looking savages it has ever been my lot to meet ; but he developed into a most useful and trustworthy man, becoming an earnest and sincere Christian, and eventually attaining to a position of trust in the service of a neighbouring cattle company, and drawing an excellent salary for an Indian. He, however, gave up his post because he was dissatisfied with the immoral tone of life which prevailed there, and returned to one of comparative poverty under the mission.

He is known throughout the Lengua-Mascoy country as “ One-eye,” a name which he received during the first measles epidemic, already alluded to. His was one of the worst cases, and he became so delirious that we were compelled to tie him down in order to prevent him throwing himself into the river. In his delirium he tried to break through a window of the hut in which he was secured, and unfortunately caught his eye upon a nail, an accident which necessitated its removal. He felt this loss keenly, and was always very sensitive about it, doing his best to cover the blemish so that it might not be easily perceived.

For many years he failed in his endeavours to obtain a wife owing to this defect, the Indian women positively

refusing to marry a man who was, as they quaintly put it, “short of a piece.” They would readily marry some worthless lad, but would not think of him, although one of the most worthy and well-to-do men on the station. He has, however, benefited by his long period of waiting, having recently married an estimable widow. Thus he has been much more successful, and is better matched than any of those who only had an eye to surface attractions.

Celia’s life and example undoubtedly had a marked effect upon all with whom she came in contact, but, unfortunately, her usefulness and influence came to an untimely end. She died at an early age from a severe attack of pneumonia. Thus ended a life which has left behind it living memorials of its influence in the many members of her family and clan, whom she was the direct means of winning to the Saviour she loved and served so faithfully.



### PART III





## CHAPTER I

### A GENERAL SURVEY

WHEN the initial difficulties attending the birth and early days of the Chaco infant Church were once overcome, and Christianity was established in the land, the Church grew steadily in numbers and power, and the fight was directed not so much against heathenism as against the evils which naturally result from Christianity becoming popular. In this our experience is common to all Churches and missions.

The adherence of merely nominal Christians to a Church always acts as a diluting and weakening influence. It is impossible to avoid this evil. Even our Lord had a Judas among the Twelve, and He has told us that the tares and wheat must grow together until the harvest; therefore it need surprise and discourage no one to find in the Chaco Indian Church such signs of weakness as are common to all.

Following the rule of our Church, we admitted the children of Christian parents to baptism. The children of the heathen were given regular religious instruction in common with those of Christian parents, and although by so doing we were helping to form character and to prepare them to accept the truth, they nevertheless became familiarized with the teaching and services of the Church, and this tended in some cases to diminish the freshness and force of Divine solemnities, and to produce formality. These young people, brought up in a Christian atmosphere, offered themselves in due course for baptism, many sincerely, but others because it was considered

the fashion or the proper thing to do ; it was therefore difficult to discriminate between them.

The younger generation of the heathen having received better instruction and fuller knowledge than their elders, gradually grew in intelligence, and came to lose their faith in heathenism and superstition, acquiring a taste for a more advanced life owing to their intercourse with the mission. Bereft of their old beliefs, they instinctively drew towards the Christian society, and were willing to adopt, nominally at least, its Faith and outward forms.

As the Church advanced and increased in numbers the gulf between the Christians and heathen became wider. The former grew steadily more Europeanized, and this marked the difference between them and the latter more decisively. Unfortunately, that spiritual pride which threatens all religious bodies began to show itself among these people. The Christians, albeit far from perfect themselves, manifested an inclination to criticize adversely and despise their heathen compatriots, and even in the honest endeavour to win them as fellow-believers, an almost unconscious tone of patronage crept in.

The custom which was introduced of allowing only the baptized to stand during the recitation of the Creed emphasized the line of demarcation. It is necessary to teach a childlike people such as we had to deal with by object-lessons. It was impossible in a mixed congregation to allow non-believers to stand and solemnly announce their faith in the Christian verities, but undoubtedly spiritual pride was fostered in the weaker and vainer converts by this mark of distinction, and the absurdity was brought home with greater force to the heathen when they knew that some who were allowed this honoured privilege were in life and moral tone little better than themselves.

Pride and ignorance go hand in hand, and those rapidly

removed from a lower to a higher level are often liable to become overbearing and presumptuous. It must be remembered that we had to deal with a strange people, and although we were anxiously seeking to guide them aright, yet experience in handling them was only to be gained slowly. We therefore adopted certain measures on trial, but were forced to wait and see what the results would be before we could condemn or retain them permanently.

We had by this time established ourselves firmly, and a settled and thriving community was growing up around us. Their mode of life differed widely from that which we found on our first arrival among them. Instead of nomads and savages, the mission Indians formed a settled colony, occupying land, and having their own separate houses. They were acquiring wealth, and enjoying a degree of comfort utterly unknown to the heathen. They engaged in regular occupations, and discipline and order reigned. They were gradually imitating our ways, and acquiring greater comfort and refinement. Family life developed, and a growing habit of cleanliness and order was being adopted in their households. Some of the more advanced were already living in a manner superior to many Paraguayan peasants.

Following on these developments, new and special workers were required to undertake control of the various branches of mission work. Some of the departments were directly connected with industries, and consequently men were brought out who were specially trained in them. This was a wise and business-like arrangement, but unconsciously it produced a marked difference in the attitude of the Indians to the staff, which, although unavoidable, was to be regretted in our particular circumstances.

In the early days our policy was to stand before the Indians as a band of brethren on an equality, the messengers of the Church to them. Among ourselves, some were in

positions of authority, as no organized force could work effectively unless under a suitable leadership, but in our daily life we all fared alike, and bore an equal part in the rougher and more menial tasks. We sought to vie with each other in serving rather than in ruling. We lived in common, the chief among us being no better off than the lowest. We discussed all the affairs of the mission in company; every man was free to give his opinion and advice, for we all sought to bring our various talents into the service of the community. Those appointed by the Society as responsible to them for the superintendence of the work naturally bore the weight of government, but so united were we that superiority of position rarely had to be asserted.

We worked side by side with the Indians. The clergy might be engaged on a Saturday working in clay for building purposes, or in clearing a well, and on Sunday would lead the services. We deemed nothing derogatory, and were at pains to show that no position which we held should cause us to look upon any work as beneath us. We found this system necessary at the time, for the Indians could only appreciate such work and service as appealed to them. We upheld our Lord's own example before them as showing the dignity and necessity of labour, and constantly impressed upon them the duty of always being profitably employed. We emphasized the danger of idleness, constantly reminding them that "although the devil tempts every man, an idle man tempts the devil." But theoretical teaching was not sufficient, it was necessary for us to prove the truth of our convictions by our own example.

The Indians were not able, at this period, to appreciate the strain of scholastic or mental work, and of this I was once very forcibly reminded. While my companion, Pride, was working in the hot sun building a hut, I was sitting near at hand in the shade, busily engaged in writing a report to

## EFFECT OF SPECIALIZATION 165

the Society. An Indian in passing upbraided me for my selfishness in leaving my countryman to do all the hard work in the heat while I was taking things easy in the shade.

The specialization of work required that some members of the staff should be almost exclusively engaged in trying and fatiguing occupations, while others, whose work was of a sedentary nature, although more exacting mentally, were yet able to dress neatly, and to do their work comfortably seated in a comparatively cool room. The growing intercourse of the Indians with the Paraguayans made them conscious of a distinction between workmen and masters. They noted the respect and deference paid to the well-dressed man who apparently was taking his ease, and began to regard those of the staff engaged in manual work as having less authority than the others, in spite of the fact that we impressed upon them that we were colleagues, equally serving the Church, and not masters and men like the Paraguayans. They were still puzzled why seeming differences should exist among us, and could not lose their regard for, and confidence in, those who had been their first leaders, and who had been the means of first elevating them to the position they now held. We have done our best to eradicate this idea, and it is to be regretted that the specialization of duties could not be avoided, since it naturally produced the impression of social distinctions in the minds of these simple people.

As the Church developed it was conducted more on English lines, and in order to emphasize the principle of self-government and self-support, churchwardens were appointed to attend to the finances. When the need of financial help was patiently explained to the people, we seldom found them backward in responding, but as this was not always possible owing to the pressure of work, their grasp and appreciation of the difficulties to be faced suffered accordingly. The people were unskilled in counting, and it was a difficult



matter, even after great painstaking, to explain to the wardens the amount of the collections as compared with the corresponding outlay in expenses.

When living among the Yahgan Indians I was frequently asked to take charge of their money, which at that time was the ordinary English currency. I accordingly noted the amount in a book, and when requested for repayment I handed over an equivalent sum. But my Yahgan friends were not agreeable to this method. They had made a mental note of the exact coins they had given me, so many pennies, so many shillings, so many half-crowns, and they would not be satisfied until I had handed over to them the exact coins. It was useless to offer them half a sovereign, and assure them that it was the corresponding value. They had given me so many brown ones, so many little white ones, and so many big white ones, and they insisted on having them back again. Our experiences were somewhat similar in dealing with the Lengua-Mascoy. If thirty dollars had been collected for the sick and poor fund, they wanted to have all particulars of the food bought; to know how many dollars had been spent on rice, and how many on sweet potatoes. A summarized balance-sheet conveyed nothing to them.

Another innovation which was introduced was the curtailment of the powers of the native Church Council, in that members were only utilized as an advisory instead of an administrative body, especially in considering the suitability of candidates for baptism and confirmation. The responsibility was centred more in the clergy. Circumstances seemed to point to the necessity for this, but perhaps ground has been lost thereby. The closer approximation of our services to the ordinary ritual of the Church at home may have been precipitate in the yet immature stage of our work. Whether this advance from greater simplicity to the more complete



PALM BUILT HOUSES

They are lathed, and clayed inside. The missionary is wearing a rice sack during the dirty work of handling the clay.



and elaborate system of the Home Church will prove advantageous or not remains to be seen.

With an increase in the membership of the Church certain attendant weaknesses became apparent. Outwardly the moral and social tone of the colony was highly creditable. When evil did exist it was done secretly, and did not offend the public gaze—in fact, it became very difficult to detect it. Although there continued to be much genuine faith and true Christianity, the outward semblance of righteousness was much greater than the actuality, and that simple earnestness which had been so characteristic of the early days was not so manifest. People attended services and observed certain customs, as much because it was considered the right thing to do, as from a sincere desire to benefit thereby.

We set ourselves to counteract as far as possible any leaning to immoral conduct, the existence of which was only to be expected in a people barely free from the evil influences of, and still surrounded by, heathenism. A special work among women was therefore inaugurated, the original and main object being to endeavour to elevate and guide the young mothers, and especially those attached to the mission. This was most desirable, as they would in a great measure influence the future generation. It was necessary to be exceedingly careful in dealing with immoral conduct. It originates in the thought, and therefore, while endeavouring to correct irregularities, it was prudent to avoid causing them to think about them more than was absolutely necessary.

The best corrective for sexual vice, and the natural one, is to encourage and exalt the marriage state, placing it in a position of great honour so that it may command respect, and to elevate the ideas attaching to it so that it ceases to be merely instinctive, and assumes a more lofty and spiritual ideal. This we taught with all the power we could, but we sought to avoid any undue show or ceremony, preferring to

try to induce the women to look upon marriage for its own sake rather than as an opportunity to display vanity and dress. I remember witnessing an Indian marriage in the south of the Continent, which was more like a burlesque than a holy ceremony. The bride wore ordinary high-heeled shoes, veil, and gloves, though under ordinary circumstances she would have gone barefooted and scantily clad.

A marked difference is noticeable in the improved morals of both the men and the women, which can only be appreciated to the full by those who know the state which existed in the earliest days. The past life of many who are now striving to keep themselves pure and unspotted makes their temptations proportionately great, and this reflects all the more credit on those who have come through the fire unscathed.

The growing requirements of a settled community laid upon the missionaries a number of burdens from which formerly they were free. Their time was fully occupied in the various branches of mission-work, and the many secular duties which such a life and people demanded. The Indians working regularly from morn till night were, like their teachers, fatigued after the day's toil, and like them retired to the rest and quietness of their homes. Such constant regularity, industry, and order were most desirable, but it prevented the free and frequent intercourse which formerly existed between the natives and the missionaries. As a natural result of more favourable conditions, the staff began to enjoy greater comforts in living than was formerly possible. Even at the present day their standard of life is simple in the extreme, but it nevertheless appears to the native community as one of great luxury when compared with their own, or with that which was previously led by the pioneers.

It is true that health and efficiency require moderate and reasonable comforts, and that only the hardiest could for long



endure the exposure, inadequate food, and hardship that were at first unavoidable. But many will agree with me that the missionary will accomplish more and retain a greater influence over the hearts of his people the nearer he approaches to their simplicity of life.

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LEADERS

WE little realize when mixing with the young what position they will rise to, and what part they will play in the development of their country. When watching two naked little savages romping with each other among the sheep and goats at a wigwam door, it did not dawn upon us that they were both destined to become leaders in the religious and social life of the Lengua-Mascoy, and in the reclamation of their tribe from savagery and heathenism to a peaceful and Christian people.

One of these boys who was known to us first as Kyemap-ăpănko-ăkyăkye—"The round or plump one bereft of brothers"—had remarkable antecedents. His grandfather was the greatest and most feared witch-doctor of his tribe. He and his wife both lived to a great age, and he must have lived with her for fully sixty-five years. Although the old couple kept aloof from the mission for a number of years, even after many of their children and grandchildren had become Christians, they were eventually irresistibly drawn to it, chiefly through the instrumentality of Kyemapăpănko-ăkyăkye, or James, as he was named at his baptism.\* It was a pleasing and cheering sight to see the two feeble and bent nonagenarians occasionally wending their way to church, and joining, hesitatingly it may be, in the worship of the true God. Although they never made an open profession of

\* See Part II., Chapter V., p. 131.

the Faith, we cannot but believe that their hearts were to a certain extent changed.

The old man, bowed with age and hardly able to walk, was eventually stricken with measles in his son's house at Mākthlawaiya. He made a fierce and desperate struggle for life, and throughout his illness he never once gave way to witchcraft. He was cheerful and bright to a degree, and laughingly assured us that he now relied on our nursing, food, and scientific medicine for his recovery, and scoffed at the idea of resorting to sorceries which he had practised for so long and up to a comparatively recent date. In spite of all our efforts to save his life, worn out as he was with age, and unable to resist the ravages of the disease, he eventually succumbed to it. Formerly he would have looked upon our attentions and medicine as highly injurious, which proves how completely he had broken with witchcraft and superstitious fears. When we visited him on our nightly rounds, groping our way from hut to hut through the long grass with the aid of a lantern, he would welcome us with a cheerful smile, and showed every sign of gratitude for our care and sympathy.

He was an interesting old man, well versed in the history and customs of his people, and in the course of long and frequent conversations with him I obtained much useful information, dating as far back as his boyhood.

His son has already been alluded to in the pages of this volume. He it was who reversed his hut in order to puzzle the ghost of a dead man. This was James's father, and he, too, was a witch-doctor who must have practised his craft for quite fifty years. Although he became a Christian, he never proved a man of strong character or decided will.

James, from his earliest years, showed none of his father's accommodating disposition, but took more after his grandfather in strength of will and determination. When he

came under the influence of Christianity he soon began to shape for himself and follow a decisive course, just as the celebrated witch-doctor had done. Even when a schoolboy—and he was one of the first scholars—he took life seriously, and proved his capacity for independent thought and action by asking awkward questions, such as why angels in pictures had wings, and, if we had never seen them, how did we know in what way to depict them.

As he grew older, his religious views began to take a very pronounced form. His Christian life was based upon firm conviction, and he maintained his right to think out matters for himself. James was never one of those who are content to become a mere tool in the hands of a set system. The right of private judgment was strongly implanted in him, and from his early years he sought to form a connection between precept and practice. Assumption of authority, and injunctions to implicit obedience, did not appeal to him. He preferred to believe in and follow what he felt was right, and was not prepared to accept the lead from any, no matter what position they held, unless he was convinced that they were directing him aright. Naturally enough, owing to his lack of general knowledge, he frequently placed himself in the wrong; but his independence of thought and character, his loyalty to his people, and his utter contempt for any form of toadyism, were qualities which early marked him out as a power in the future development of his people.

He was of a deeply religious nature, and was more interested in matters pertaining to religion and Church management than in the social advancement and temporal good of his tribe. His austerity prevented him from becoming a general favourite with his people, but the sincerity of his life, and a desire to do what was just and right, commanded their respect. He was in every way more qualified to become a leader in the Church than any Indian we have known. His

own spiritual life was creditable and thoroughly practical. He applied himself assiduously to the private reading of such Scriptures as were translated, and to the regular habit of asking God's blessing on all his undertakings. This was done so quietly and unobtrusively that it was only by accident we came to know of it. James could never be accused of that unworthy and contemptible parade of religion which favourably impresses some people.

He is destined to play a more important part in the development and future of the Indian Church than he has hitherto done. It must be remembered that he is only an Indian in knowledge and capacity, and whether his influence and independence of thought are to prove a blessing or otherwise will depend entirely upon how he is guided by his European teachers.

Some of our native teachers once met an emissary of a new cult at a village in the interior. The villagers seem to have been divided in their opinion, and on a discussion being opened they demanded that the reputed manuscript revelations should be produced. Some stated that a few of their people had learnt to read at the mission-station, and that the Christians who were present had books with them which set forth their particular doctrines. They argued that by perusing those of the new sect, and by comparing them with the Christians' teaching, they could thereby arrive at a conclusion as to which was worthy of their acceptance. In a confused manner the emissary began groping in his bag for the manuscripts, but had to admit that he had unfortunately left them in his own village. Shortly afterwards he took his departure.

This cult is undoubtedly an indirect result of Christian teaching. The people as a whole are no longer satisfied with heathenism as it is. They feel that its day is past, and while they seek liberty to follow some of their own



vices, they are conscious of a void that must be filled by something higher and different.

What this will lead to it is difficult to say. One thing is very certain: if Christianity is to triumph, the Indian Church must take the lead, and must deal with heathenism on Indian lines. If a man like James—who, although by no means in sympathy with this new cult, yet has a marked leaning towards promoting his own decided opinions—is not wisely utilized, it is not at all impossible that divisions and schisms may grow up to the permanent injury of the Church. Only by the building up of a native Church and by means of a native movement can permanence and stability be secured. Our aim must be to advance Indian management and control according as the people become able to bear it, and—keeping European authority in the background as much as possible—to be content to be advisers rather than dictators.

As a striking contrast to James, some mention needs to be made of Metegyak (his companion from childhood) as the social leader of his people. He was brought up in connection with the mission, and was baptized a year later than James, taking the name of John. He was one of the three who showed symptoms of having been poisoned during the rebellion instigated by the witch-doctors at Waikthlating-māngyalwa. Both belonged to the same clan, and their friendship was further cemented by John's marriage with a sister of James.

He was always a bright boy, and developed into a keenly intelligent and quick-witted young man. Although quite as sincere a Christian as James, and one who has from the first taken a prominent part in the development of the Church, yet Metegyak's (John's) trend of mind is rather towards advancing the social and material welfare of his people, thus indirectly proving to them the advantages of a Christian civilization.

Industrious and thrifty, he is one of our cleverest mechanics, and is the leading native merchant, trading having been developed among them by the Indian Co-operative Society.\*

He has taken a leading part in providing recreation and entertainment of a refined and ennobling character to take the place of the baser and more childish diversions common to his people, and from which they are gradually breaking away owing to the spread of education and the consequent desire for higher tastes. He holds the office of Secretary of the Young Men's Social Society, or Nimpathlăkthlăma-ingkyitkowuk, as it is called by them, meaning "The mingling together of us young people."

Metegyak, of all others, exercises by far the greatest influence over the native women, which is a high tribute to the strength and uprightness of his character, because the Indian women are exceedingly difficult to manage. Although he is young, he is able to censure and guide them, and yet retain their regard and respect. He is exceedingly tactful, and knows so well how to handle his fellow-countrymen that he can rule and direct without giving offence. He is popular far and wide, and is regarded with almost affection by heathen and Christian alike.

He comes of a family possessing considerable character which, even before the mission was established, was remarkable for many worthy qualities. His mother is the only woman known to have been never mixed up in the quarrels of her sex, neither have we had any occasion to complain seriously of her general conduct.

Metegyak's immediate relatives were less influenced by the superstitions and fears of their tribe than any other family with whom we have been acquainted. Their original home was in the north-west, and we have noticed that the people

\* See Part III., Chapter VI., pp. 215-217.

of that particular district are, as a whole, less under the influence of witchcraft, and more inclined to be progressive than those of any other clan. They were the people who most readily adopted European ideas and customs, and who were the more easily influenced by opportunities to develop. This is all the more significant since the clan in question is situated in a remote district, and had no opportunity of coming into contact with foreigners. No explorers, as far as I know, have ever crossed in that direction. There is a very pronounced similarity of type among them, and it may be interesting to note that Pinse-äpawa, Mängwiamai-inkyin the Mopai-senhiks, and Soyabik-inkyin all originated from this same stock. The home life of these people was of a much more pronounced family type than usual, and they all exhibited a power to rule and lead.

For comfort and advancement the present home life of James and Metegyak stand out prominently. Metegyak has amassed by his own efforts what may justly be termed a fortune from an Indian standpoint. James has not shown the same business capacity, but he has nevertheless developed thrift, and a certain ingenuity in increasing his income which is very noteworthy. In his spare time, for example, he shows considerable ability in repairing gunstocks for his people.

Both James and Metegyak are thoroughly patriotic and attached to their people, being always ready to say a word in favour of legitimate customs and ways. They do not in the least feel ashamed of being Indians, nor do they try to ape or pose as foreigners. Their influence is very marked over the boys, especially the more shallow-brained, who do their best to ignore their connection with the past, once they advance a degree or two ahead of their fellows. These two leaders inspire feelings of self-respect in them, and impress upon them the duty of upholding their race, and of trying to

perfect it in order that they may be able to win and hold a position among other peoples.

James has evinced a strong desire to travel throughout his country, and among the bordering tribes, chiefly with a view to their evangelization. Metegyak, on the other hand, has a more adventurous and inquiring spirit, and would like to see the outside world and study various civilizations. He seems to realize that his present sphere and knowledge are very limited, and has a yearning for gaining a wider experience.

In these two young men the reader will have perceived the qualities necessary for the formation, building up, and leadership of the people. There are others of like tastes, but not so pronounced, who only require suitable conditions for their development. These two have been singled out as types of the material used for the foundation of the mission, and with such hopeful talent at our disposal, even though it be limited in numbers, we have every reason to believe that, if we fail not in our duty, a vigorous Church and people can be built up, destined to become worthy of a place in history.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LANGUAGE

THE reduction of a hitherto unknown tongue is of great interest to the scientist for purposes of comparison with those languages which belong to the same family group. These, together with the folklore and customs of the people, enable him to establish relations with tribes since scattered, and to trace their common birthplace and origin.

The object, however, of the present chapter is not a scientific one, but rather aims at giving the general reader an idea of the steps taken, and the difficulties met with and overcome, in the acquisition of a full and complete knowledge of the Lengua-Mascoy language, in order to produce a literature for the people, to teach them how to read it when printed, and to make known to them in their own tongue the works and ordinances of God.

Several years ago a curious and interesting manuscript was published by the museum authorities of La Plata. It was written in 1793 by Don Juan Francisco Aguirre, and contained, among other ethnological matter, short vocabularies of the various tribes inhabiting the river district of Paraguay. The hundred odd Lengua-Mascoy words appearing in it would have been useful as a foundation for building up the language had we known of their existence earlier in the mission's history, but, as it is, they only serve to show what little change has taken place in the words therein collated. The Lengua-Mascoy tribe, now commonly called Lengua



only, was known in the eighteenth century as Mascoy, and it is probable that those who were then termed Lengua are familiar to us under the name of Towothli, a small tribe residing to the south-west of the Lengua-Mascoy.

It was among the Kyoi-nawatsām (as the clan dwelling near the banks of the River Paraguay is called) that the mission was started. These had come into contact with the Paraguayans, and in consequence could converse brokenly in Spanish or Guarani (the colloquial of Paraguay). Their knowledge, however, was very limited, and of little use to us in mastering their own language: only a few simple words and phrases were acquired from them.

On penetrating to the interior of the country we found that the inland clans were utterly ignorant of either Spanish or Guarani, and the only method open to us of learning the language was to listen patiently to the people talking together, until our ears grew somewhat accustomed to the strange sounds. Words and sentences were then written down phonetically, and a guess made at the meanings. A query was placed alongside each word until we had further confirmation as to its meaning, but we lost no opportunity of introducing it into our conversation with the natives, by which means we gradually discovered its exact signification. The names of objects, heavenly bodies, animals, and trees, that we could point to or touch were naturally the easiest to master, but even with these we sometimes blundered, to the amusement of the people. Exactness, for example, with the accent and gender is absolutely essential. Of the latter we were profoundly ignorant in the early stages of work. "Méwa" is the puma, while "mewá" is the Chilean eagle. "Āptasik nata" signifies "the good tortoise," while "intasik nata" means "the bird is good." "Tawa" is axe, "āptawa" is wife, "itawa" is husband, "intawa" could be either, according to the speaker, "'ntawa," a wild fruit. From these

examples it will be seen how easy it was to confuse an axe with a wife, or a husband with a black fruit.

An Englishman is not always prepared to use the same noun for teeth, thorns, spines, splinters, bills of birds, prongs of forks, tusks of the wild boar, and the barb of a fish-hook ; or to use but one verb to express sound, ring, buzz, chirp, croak, creak, bleat, bellow, low, neigh, bark, crow, cackle, cry, mew, sing, etc. He wonders, too, what connection there is between pipe and earth, bird's tail and a pipe-stem, a bow-string and a pot-handle, hooking a fish and smoking a pipe, the dimness of a looking-glass and cold gravy, a rent in his clothes and the clearness of water, for in all these pairs of expressions the same word is employed. He further discovers that he must use a different word when speaking of a dog's tail and a bird's tail; and that he cannot indiscriminately speak of washing cups and plates, as from an Indian point of view cups, pots, dishes, and tumblers, have skins and bellies as well as animate things.

He does not in the first instance appreciate the fact that the plural prefix "kil" may alter the meaning of a word. He might complacently imagine he is using the simple plural of "see," only to find later on that he has spoken of "stamping his feet and sniffing the air," like a deer. The words "hănci," to boil in a pot, and "kilhănci," to set a trap, "măthnăkyi," to sharpen an axe, and "kilmăthnăkyi," to ask or pray, are examples of expressions that were frequently confused.

The guesses at the meaning of words relating to abstract ideas were often incorrect; and because native politeness forbade the correction of our mistakes, we were allowed for months to use terms like marriage and celibacy for love and hatred. The word "lămk yi," which is applied to animals habitually fierce and savage, we employed to express the anger of man; while the word "aiyasegathma," meaning

ignorance and stupidity, was mistakenly introduced for sin; and so strenuously and continuously was it employed that we could not change it in later years when a better word was found.

The Indians in the early years not only failed to point out our errors and misuse of words, but they even adopted our blundering modes of expression when speaking to us. One example must suffice: The word "isănta" really means "to carry here in the hands." Being one of the commonest and simplest words for "bring," and among the first we learnt, it was used indiscriminately by us; and we therefore ignorantly asked to have horses and cattle, bullock-carts, sacks of rice, children and people, brought to us in the hands. In each of the above cases a different word requires to be used. Horses and cattle are "driven"; bullock-carts and other vehicles are "conveyed on their own wheels"; sacks of rice are "shouldered"; children are "carried in the arms"; and men and women are "commanded to come."

The language is exceedingly rich in verbs. There are many words for "going," for example, which convey numerous shades of meaning. Naturally, we were at first content with the two only, but when an exact translation is necessary the verb has to be carefully chosen. One must take into consideration the person, his circumstances and his intentions, whether the traveller has been that way before, or whether he is a visitor, or a wild animal coming for the first time, or if he moves with a set purpose. To take at random several passages from the Gospels: "John came"; "Jesus came to His own city"; "A leper came to him"; "Jesus came into a Pharisee's house"; "He came into the house of Martha"—the verb "to come" in each case is a distinctly different word.

To acquire the correct native accent demands constant repetition, nor must one be content to utter only isolated

words. The accent of a word frequently alters when it is combined with others; changes for euphony take place, words are contracted, the object and subject are reversed and many modifications made, and, what is most important, the people themselves have to become accustomed to the stranger's voice. The trained musician detects many defects in ordinary singing, and an educated ear discovers flaws in a native's pronunciation. He does not articulate clearly, and in consequence one can learn the correct pronunciation from a fellow-missionary more readily than from a native. The trebles of women and children are clearer than the deeper tones of the men, and the linguist finds it necessary to hear the same word or phrase from a number of individuals before he can be absolutely certain of the correct pronunciation.

Having learnt to express a phrase with the correct words, tone, and accent, we still had the prejudices of the people to contend with. Some visitors arrived on one occasion from the north, and we set them to work at cutting away the undergrowth in a wood at the back of a mission-house. One man was hacking away with a blunt axe and doing double work, so a missionary told him to go and sharpen his axe because it was blunt. He simply looked up in a stupefied kind of way, and recommenced hacking. Again the missionary remonstrated, taking care to use the correct term and accent, but the Indian paid no attention; so a native spoke to him, using exactly the same words, tone, and accent, upon which the man obeyed without a murmur. The explanation was simply this: he had formed the idea that we did not know his language, and, consequently, whatever the missionary said he treated as if it were in a foreign tongue, and did not even try to understand it.

On the other hand, the boys who grew up with us understood us perfectly, and gave us credit for correct speaking when we sometimes did not intend to convey the full mean-



ing. By a slight slip of the tongue, one of the missionaries once said to a boy who was carrying a jug of milk : " Put that jug on the ground *without hesitation*, and hold this for me." Down went the jug with its contents, *without hesitation* ; and when the boy was reprimanded for breaking it and for spilling the milk, the missionary's anger was mollified by receiving one of the prettiest compliments of his life. " I thought you spoke our language correctly," said the boy.

There is a word " kilyaschiam," which refers to a custom of the Indians of conning over certain phrases preparatory to telling a story, which they improve upon each time that it is narrated, and the result is that the language to-day contains a great many of these set phrases which are quoted in the same way as we recite poetry or repeat the epigrams of our great literary men. These are used when telling a thrilling story, and as a kind of valedictory address to a departing friend. The boys learn these phrases off by rote as the Chinese their classics. To the initiated they are exceedingly useful, but they were frequently used to baffle us when some conversation was proceeding that they wished to keep to themselves.

Up to a certain stage the people readily instructed us in their language as far as they could, though their explanations of words were not always so lucid as one might desire. A man (nicknamed by us " Thorn," after his daughter " Rose ") was overheard giving an explanation of the word " mahang-kyi "—" to go in the direction of for the first time." He was repeating about a dozen words of movement, with comments : " Oh yes, it is like ' to go away,' ' to go back,' ' to go over there,' ' to go there for a purpose,' ' to go there again ' ; like ' a man going out to shoot deer ' ; like ' a woman moving through the swamp ' ; like ' an ostrich going into the open camp ' " ; and so on, to the utter bewilderment of the learner.

After the people discovered that we could use some of



their words too readily for their liking when they wished to do evil, they became very reluctant to help us, and we had to adopt various plans, and resort to stratagems to secure what we required. Whenever Indians congregated together, the missionary would endeavour to remain concealed, feign sleep, or in a hundred different ways place himself at a point of vantage and write down such words and sentences as he could overhear.

A favourite method was to utilize their inherent clan jealousy to help forward the study of the language. When strangers from the southern villages visited us, they would readily tell us what we wanted to know. Then the station Indians would come to us and say that the southerners' language was not good, meaning, of course, that they spoke a different dialect; and in order to be on favoured terms again, they would give us the proper linguistic equivalent of the words under discussion.

When a number of words and phrases had been collected, we arranged a vocabulary and began to work out a grammar of the language. There are five main divisions running through the language, each with a distinct set of pronominal prefixes, and about fifty inflections to each division. Further study showed us the relation of these divisions to each other, and a similarity running through the prefixes, but each verb had to be worked out separately in order to assign it its true place.

Without grasping in the least the grammatical significance of what they were doing, Indians were persuaded to repeat forms of the word that brought out the characteristic prefix. One old man, severely nicknamed by us "The Prevaricator," was a good talker, clear and incisive in tone, perfect in accent, and possessed of a good command of language. His services would have been very useful, but he resolutely refused all work. Strutting about with his bow and wooden digger, he

pretended to do a little hunting and gardening; but we rarely saw any of the game that he killed, and the garden produce we gravely suspected of coming from another's planting. On one occasion fish was scarce, game lacking, and the gardens empty, so he came to one of the missionaries asking for food. A long list of verbs was ready, waiting to be arranged in their proper divisions, so the missionary said to him: "If you will help me with these words I will give you a cup of rice." "Good!" he replied, "but you won't tell anyone, will you?" And he sat on the floor in a dark corner of the room. The man came day after day, and answered the needed questions in exchange for the dole of rice.

In this and other ways the details of the language were worked out. At a fairly early stage the existence of gender and number was apparent. The former is a very interesting subject, especially taken in conjunction with a kindred study—namely, men's and women's language. The arrangement for person and gender throughout the *Lengua-Mascoy* tongue ignores the third person. The second personal prefix, in other words, has to do duty for the third person as well; but by both personal pronoun and prefix a distinction is made between masculine and feminine; so in order to address a woman a different pronoun and prefix must be used, and in some cases a different word. The phrase, for example, "Have you arrived, friend?"—"Äbwäkteyiaa thliyi sibi?" addressing a man, and "Ingwäkteyiaa thliyi sema?" addressing a woman—is a good illustration of the point.

Grammatically, it is thus impossible to address a mixed audience; but as women are not considered in matters demanding discussion relative to war and difficulties attending native life, no provision was made for publicly addressing both sexes at the same time. If the women are allowed to sit on the outer circle and listen while a council of war is held, the remarks are not addressed to them.

Some few words—names of animals, the elements, trees, etc.—are masculine, while all the others are feminine. Any noun that is dependent upon another noun (or governed by a possessive noun) is feminine—the parts of the human body, for example. It is not usual to speak of *the* hand, but of *his* or *her* hand. The masculine division of nouns, however, is a grammatical distinction, and is not coincident with sex, resembling the English word “goat”; but the interesting puzzle is, why should there be this distinction? All deer save one are masculine; most of the ducks and parrots are masculine, but there are exceptions; certain trees are masculine, but most are feminine; the sun and clouds are feminine, but the moon, stars, and rainbow are masculine.

The following suggestion of Dr. Lafone-Quevedo (Director of the La Plata Museum, near Buenos Aires), in his “Introduction to the Study of the Mocovi Language,” is interesting and worthy of note: “Many times I have thought that the abstract gender of words in the Aryan and Semitic languages probably corresponds in their origin with the confusion of men’s and women’s speech. For, really, a more illogical grammatical resource can hardly be conceived than this abstract gender of words. All this is explicable if we suppose that there was a time in which what we find exists to-day in the Carib existed also in the Aryan. It is well worth while for European philologists to study this point.”\*

Each year we added to our vocabulary, and were better able to compile dictionaries and grammars. We studied to perfect ourselves in conversation and public speech, and as the people became more friendly and confiding the work of reduction was simply a matter of routine and collation.

\* “Seccion del Chaco—Mocovi,” p. 33.

## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION

CHILD-LIFE is interesting all the world over, and not the least so in the Paraguayan Chaco. The little naked boys and girls playing about the native villages, full of life and fun, are the pride of their parents and the hope of the missionaries. It is a common sight to see an old man sitting cross-legged and patiently making curious string puzzles for the entertainment of the little ones, or instructing them in the names of various objects. Another is trimming a miniature bow and arrow for his grandchild, or arranging a shuttlecock for one of the other little playfellows. Gathering together in a band, the boys often set out to shoot birds or to hunt the bright-skinned lizards, while the girls play at "kyosomo."

At other times they can be seen packing up their household goods and removing them to a fresh place, in imitation of moving camp. A dust-storm springing up, they will gleefully dance and jump about in it, and then huddle together in their huts, among the dogs, fowls, and rubbish, when the rain comes on.

The children soon become friendly with the missionaries, except in remote villages, where we are used as bogies to scare them when they become troublesome to their parents. Their innocent prattle and playful ways keep our hearts young and our spirits bright in the midst of much that is revolting and depressing.

In common with other children, they begin very early to appreciate pictures, especially those of animals, and we are constantly asked to produce picture-books, and to explain the subjects—in fact, this was our rudimentary school. Quick to observe anything common to their own life, from a deer in a distant swamp to the footprint of a bird, they find it difficult at first to appreciate the minutiae of a picture, but it is an education to them to puzzle out the details of the various illustrations we show them. In this way some of the more prominent letters are taught.

Towards the end of the year 1896 the first public services were begun, chiefly by the use of the lantern, which the more superstitious people objected to because of “the little devil in the box,” as they interpreted it. But the children delighted in it, having grown accustomed to the displaying of pictures.

On June 21 of the following year, school-work began in real earnest under the care of R. J. Hunt. Gathering a few of the elder boys, of about ten years of age, into his room, and seating them on the mud floor, he began to explain the various letters. He used their crude drawings of animals, trees, and other objects (which were little more than signs), to serve as an introductory illustration of letters, and then proceeded to show that they were representations of sounds. The letter “s,” for example, was not a snake as they supposed, but the hissing sound that a snake makes. In order to aid their memory, separate explanations and nicknames were given to the letters. “K” was “crooked-back”; “y” rejoiced in the name of “big mouth”; “u” was “roofless”; “w” was “double-mouth”; “p” the “parrot’s nest,” and so forth.

An Indian does many things backwards according to our way of thinking. He mounts on the off-side of his horse; reverses a sentence in speaking; and in telling the Gospel story he often commences at the Ascension or Resurrection,



and then goes back to Bethlehem. When looking at a picture he can distinguish the details as well if it is topsy-turvy as he can when it is the right way up, and even later on in school-life he can read from an upturned book just as well as in the conventional way.

When reading-sheets were drawn up, another peculiarity faced the teacher. Accustomed in their own life to geographical positions, the teachers never speak of anything being on the left or right hand, but to the north or south, or at some other point of the compass. The boys pointed out words by their position on the sheet. The word "tata," for example, was "to the east," "sewa" was "to the west," and so on.

Owing to clan jealousy, we at first met with great difficulty in conducting the school. The boys from one district might say "abik," while the others would call it "abāk," and the unfortunate pupil who used the dialectal form was severely reprimanded by the others. The corrected lad would sometimes take offence, and would refuse to come to school for many weeks.

The wandering life of the people for purposes of hunting, visiting, and attending feasts was another difficulty, causing more vacations in the school year than was either healthy or advisable, and the teacher had to begin all over again on their return.

After two years of fighting against various odds, utilizing every opportunity, steadily and persistently teaching the rudiments of reading and writing, and giving daily instruction in Bible truths, the teacher was at last rewarded in seeing his scholars become keen on their work.

The years 1899 and 1900 were perhaps the happiest and most successful in our school history. Progress was evident in every branch of work. The boys settled down to real, hard, and persistent effort, and the necessity for books became

apparent. The first books were produced in manuscript form, the next set were typed, and still the desire for more reading matter remained unsatisfied. A "Reader" was accordingly drawn up, and printed on a little hand-press which we possessed. This was followed by a Service Book which contained our first translations, and included the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Decalogue, most of the Morning Service and the Litany. This was followed by another Reader, which contained short stories and fables. These little books, though very imperfect, were read incessantly by the scholars, and still they asked for more.

Translations were now made in type from both the Old and New Testament, in order to keep the boys supplied with fresh reading matter; and these enabled us to teach with more accuracy and effect. They also provided lessons for our Church services. In order to retain these typed sheets in a more permanent form, they were pasted into stiff-covered manuscript books, and suitable pictures illustrating Bible stories were cut out and inserted opposite the letterpress, thus forming an illustrated Old and New Testament. Ten years later these books were still in existence and in good condition. They were carefully treasured, and frequently read by Metegyak, who was one of the first schoolboys. When he was asked why he still continued to read and prize them, seeing there were newer and better translations, he replied: "These pages were our first Bible, from which we learned to read, and not caring to see them neglected, I locked them up in my box, and on Sundays I take them out and read them."

Many of these Biblical stories were not so much translations of passages as idiomatic paraphrases; and though there were errors from the translation point of view, they were written with very fair command of the language. The boys learnt many of these stories by heart, and when later they were



THE FIRST CHURCH BUILT IN THE CHACO.

It is built entirely of palm logs and roofed with palm tiles. The tower is 46 feet high, with four floors, reached by ladders from within.



allowed to speak in public, the Gospel stories were often told in the words of the "Illustrated Bible."

These stories formed the basis of our later translation work. The Gospel of St. Mark was prepared first, and was printed at our own Mission Press. Lacking suitable decorative type for a cover, a "Piskap," or dragon-fly, was placed in the centre, and this is still known as the "Piskap Edition." This tentative production was very imperfect, but the style of language was idiomatic. The boys who could read rejoiced at its appearance, and spent hours in studying it. Wherever they went they took their Gospel with them, and read the stories to all their friends. Many improvements were made in the second edition, published by the Bible Society in 1908. But certain phrases had become very precious to the first readers, and when new expressions were suggested, Hunt, the translator, was informed that though the proposed phrase was quite correct, "So-and-so," as the "Piskap Edition" had it, was preferred by them, reminding one of those who cling to the familiar ring of the Authorized Version of the Bible.

The manuscript translation of the Book of Genesis was next revised and printed. This, so to speak, closed the initial stage of school and translation work.

As soon as the boys were able to read and write, a little was accomplished in the way of arithmetic. From later pages in this volume it will be seen that boys like James and Metegyak made good use of their education by training others, and teaching them the fundamentals of Christianity.

It was now necessary to stereotype and consolidate the work, and a Reader was compiled and printed in bold type. A child mastering the principles set forth in this work could with practice read any translation in the language. Singing was taught, and various other requisites provided when G. R. Farrow took charge of the school-work.



The increase in the number of Christians demanded a fuller and more elaborate service, more prayers were added, and the Canticles and some of the Offices translated. These were carefully revised, and eventually, in 1907, the whole of the Church of England Prayer-Book, with the exception of the Psalms, some of the Gospels and Epistles, and the Articles, was published by the S.P.C.K. Hymns were also introduced. The first book was printed at the Mission Press, which was followed by an edition comprising thirty-six hymns, printed in Buenos Aires. These have been revised and augmented, and a hymnal containing ninety hymns was published at the beginning of 1911 by the S.P.C.K.

To those of us who knew the people in their wild and heathen state, and were accustomed to the long-drawn and weird nocturnal chanting with gourd-rattle accompaniment, or to the piercing notes of the funeral wail, or to the heavy droning and groaning sounds of the sick-charming chant, a vivid contrast is presented by the notes of praise that daily ascend to God in the familiar hymn-tunes of our Church, causing us to rejoice and to realize that our work has not been labour lost or energy misspent.

Year by year the children pass out of the school, educated for their life's work, instructed in the ways of righteousness, and prepared to take up some trade and to learn some of the harder lessons of life. These are ignorant of the dark past of their parents, and are surrounded from infancy with the light of truth. We look to them, therefore, as the heralds of the Gospel to the regions beyond.

One word still remains to be said with regard to the language and education. The final edition of the Grammar has been carefully compiled and the Dictionaries completed, all of which were published in 1911. The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles have also been translated and printed by the Bible Society (the expense of this being borne by the

Arthington Trustees), and the book, neatly bound, is in every way a great contrast to our first productions. All of these works are from the pen of R. J. Hunt, and are now in circulation among the natives, telling their own tale of the wondrous works of God.

## CHAPTER V

### MEDICAL WORK

“YES, sir, I was reading about a medical mission in China the other day, and there is no doubt that it is doing marvellous work. I always believed that in pioneering among the heathen the medical missionary should go first. It is the Apostolic way—heal the sick and preach the Gospel—and we cannot improve upon the old methods. In a mission like yours medical work should certainly pioneer the way for the Gospel; the quickest way to reach the heart is by first healing the body.”

Words to such effect have been more than once spoken to me by the theorist. They remind me of the case of the coloured gentleman who hoped to make a fortune out of hen-farming. He culled the information he required from various authorities. Hens cost so much to feed, lived so many years and laid so many eggs. He worked it out and found that undoubtedly there were thousands in it. But he had omitted to take into account a few practical facts, such as that hens do not always lay according to theory, and that they sometimes die before their allotted term of life. After a few years' experience of practical hen-farming he found that his hopes of making a fortune were a mere chimæra. Many other people act in a similar way: they put a theory on paper, and are disappointed if it does not work out in practice. They hear of a certain work being prosecuted on

certain lines in one part of the world, and can see no reason why it should not be equally successful in another.

A medical mission to the Chaco Indians in the early days of the work would have proved impracticable. It would have been attended by numerous difficulties, rewarded with disappointing results, and would have exposed those practising it to considerable personal danger.

The people are very conservative, and until recently they had implicit faith in their witch-doctors, who themselves strongly opposed any attempt on our part to interfere with their patients. In the event of our being allowed to attend a sick Indian, we were often regarded as witch-doctors ourselves, and ran the grave risk of being hailed as murderers if the patient died under our treatment. During the first year of my residence among the Lengua-Mascoy, I was allowed to attend an old woman who was suffering from malarial fever, and when I succeeded in giving her relief, the people were pleased and looked upon me as possessing a very creditable knowledge of witchcraft. A few weeks later they called upon me to cure a child who was dying of bronchial pneumonia. Seeing that the patient was past all recovery, I could do little to prolong its life, and it died half an hour later. The Indians at once became furious and threatening. They reminded me of my recent success in restoring the woman, and accused me of unfriendliness towards the child, saying that they knew my powers of witchcraft were sufficient to have saved its life had I so wished. They practically held me responsible for its death, and I never regained the friendship or confidence of those particular Indians.

The work of a medical man among such a people was, until recently, a disappointing and thankless task. They were very suspicious of certain of our remedies, and we had to exercise great caution in giving medicines to them. Even in the case of so simple and necessary a remedy as quinine, I was at first

compelled to take a dose myself in the presence of the patient before he would consent to take one. This was no hardship if only one patient a day applied for relief, but if five or six had to be treated it became rather severe upon the doctor.

The people had a disagreeable habit of applying to a number of healers who were approached separately, and of making no reference to previous treatment. The results were sometimes extremely awkward for the patient. I remember the case of a native who applied to three missionaries in turn for medicine, and made no mention whatever of the fact that he had already been treated once or twice by others. His ailment was a very slight one, but before he had finished with the third doctor, he had become really ill.

Sometimes an Indian would come to one of the missionary party to have a wound dressed, but on returning to his village he would almost invariably unbandage the part affected, and expose it to the curious and interested gaze of the spectators. The witch-doctor would then be called in to pass his opinion upon the treatment. After spitting all over the wound he would apply some of his remedies to it, and then the by now dirty bandages would be replaced. Among a less healthy people such treatment would prove fatal, but with them complications seldom set in. The point, however, is this, that if a cure is not effected the missionary is blamed, but if the wound heals, as it usually does, the witch-doctor gets all the credit. I can remember no instance during the first half of the mission's history in which we received the whole praise for our medical services; very often serious trouble followed, and lives were even lost owing to the interference of the witch-doctors with the treatment already given.

In order to accomplish any satisfactory results in medical work, it is necessary to be in a position to insure care and attention for the patient, otherwise the trouble may be



aggravated. This is borne out in the case of an Indian whom I was treating as best I could for inflammation of the lungs ; after making him a bed, I placed a mustard plaster on his chest, and assured him that it would do him much good, but that he must be patient and keep himself perfectly covered until I returned and removed it. A little later I found him at the open window, cooling his chest by the cold wind. As soon as the plaster had begun to irritate, he had taken it off and had thrown it away to a safe distance. He upbraided me for my cruelty, saying that when I saw him sick and suffering, I had put something on his chest which had increased rather than relieved the pain. Similar cases are not uncommon in trying to relieve an ignorant and superstitious people, especially without proper equipment or a suitable place in which to tend them, and if the power to compel them to remain there until such time as they have recovered is absent. It has been a common experience in the Chaco, after having persuaded Indians to submit to our treatment, to find that when we were looking for good results, they would suddenly leave us either of their own accord, or at the instigation of their friends.

Reports were frequently circulated that the missionaries caused people to become ill, and that the places where they resided were more liable to sickness, and the scene of more deaths than the smaller and remote villages. This was to a certain extent true, for, except during epidemics, the mortality was greater on the mission-station than in the surrounding heathen villages. But this is easily explained. The population of an Indian village seldom exceeds sixty all told, whereas at Waikthlatingmängyalwa two hundred and fifty was the usual number of residents. While the natives disposed of many of their aged and infants, every possible means was taken to preserve them on the mission-station, and it is only natural therefore that many of the very old people

came and settled there. The death-rate among them was proportionately great, and to the unthinking Indian it appeared much greater than among themselves; in fact, they would sometimes leave their old people in our care, and then remark how free their villages were from death. Cases of infanticide have no place in the Indian's estimation of the death-rate, and since we prevented this crime, the number of children with us increased. The Indians on the station, however, had not yet attained to sufficient knowledge in the care of delicate children, and we were not at that time in a position to take over the management of such cases. The result was that many of them died, and this was regarded as telling adversely against us.

The native idea was that almost every physical trouble was caused by evil spirits and witch-doctors. We were naturally the central topic of conversation throughout the country, and what we did or said was eagerly passed on from village to village. The witch-doctors knew full well that our influence was powerful and growing, and they, together with other evilly-disposed persons, lost no opportunity of turning our sayings and actions, or anything that happened on the station, to our disadvantage.

During an epidemic the people instinctively separate as widely as possible to avoid contagion. When deaths take place they are rarely referred to, and so the full mortality never arrests the attention of the people as a whole. The little knots into which they separate may each register one death, but this, together with the fact that only two or three would generally be ill at the same time, is all that appeals to them; they do not consider the aggregate mortality of the various little bands. Among the mission Indians the position is very different; we concentrate the people during an epidemic in order to be the better able to cope with it. Thus the Indians are overwhelmed at the spectacle of fifty or more



THE GENERAL BATH HOUR  
Little Indian children bathing.



A FAMILY DINNER PARTY  
Sharing out of the common pot.



people being ill at a time, and perhaps seven or eight dying, and conclude that the place of safety lies as far as possible from the mission settlement.

In the early years we had considered the idea of building a simple hospital in which cases could be properly treated, but many difficulties had first to be overcome. The Indian is averse to discipline, and hates confinement. Their prejudices had to be considered, and some of their laws and habits completely altered. One of their customs is to immediately vacate a village where a death occurs, and to burn everything to the ground. A hospital would naturally witness many deaths within its walls, and we could not afford to build and equip a place only to run the risk of having it burnt down on such provocation. One of their laws is to put to death anyone found guilty of carrying infection from one place to another. The Indian knows very little about the causes and effects of an illness, and a man suffering from any disease, whether infectious or not, would feel timid about coming to our station for treatment in case he might be accused of introducing sickness. So strong is this fear that outsiders prefer to suffer in the open country than to come to us. Again, had a death occurred in the hospital, no other patient could have been induced to remain there, owing to the depressing effect it would have had on those who were ill. Thus a hospital would have had an adverse instead of a beneficial influence.

In the case of any sickness or accident, such as snake-bite, the Indians' custom is to crowd round the sufferer, and they are not particular as to the remarks they make. They will, for example, openly assure the patient that there is no hope of his recovery, and that he is on the point of dying. Thus, without meaning any harm, but with a mistaken idea of frankness, they unwittingly do much to retard recovery. It would be utterly impossible in a hospital, however crude, to



admit a crowd smoking and talking, and discussing with the patient his chances of life or death.

The natives have a strong belief that certain foods must be avoided by sick people, and unfortunately they object to those which are most necessary and nourishing, such as milk, beef-tea, rice-water, and soups. They look upon the cold pack as barbarous, and on one occasion regarded me in the light of a brutal murderer because I recommended a hot bath for a child in convulsions.

The country inhabited by these people, although superficially it appears to be a white man's grave, is in reality fairly healthy considering its formation and position in the tropics. This is chiefly attributable to the salts which exist in the soil, as well as to its freedom from sources of contamination. Typhoid is known along the banks of the River Paraguay; but in the interior, although we are often compelled to drink the most repulsive-looking water, yet no case of typhoid has ever been met with. Doubtless, as the population increases and the Indians take to living in permanent villages, and more foreigners enter the country, disease will become more prevalent. Were the Chaco otherwise than healthy, the Indians, with their crude system of treating the sick and of combating disease, would be quite incapable of maintaining their existence.

A very common idea seems to prevail that a savage people such as these suffer little, and that childbirth is quite a harmless operation of nature, the fact that deformity hardly exists being often pointed to as proof of this. Many seem to be unaware that deformed children are usually not allowed to live, and that a delicate child generally dies in its first or second year. Should any case of weakness arise after this period, it often results in death from the want of proper treatment. Thus the Indians, although few in number, appear to the casual observer to be a strong, healthy, and vigorous

people, and this is attributed to their natural and free mode of life, whereas in reality it is only a case of the survival of the fittest.

In contemplating the future of the people, we realized that if they were to be saved as a race, medical science would have to be brought in to their aid. Had we not from the earliest days laid the foundation for a permanent work in the up-building and training of the people, they would inevitably have died out, as in other parts of the world. But we felt that it was futile to force them on too rapidly or to endeavour to persuade them to accept a superficial civilization without laying a sound and gradual foundation for it. Although it pained us to see suffering and death which might otherwise have been avoided, we nevertheless determined that medical work should advance only so far and so fast as the people were prepared to receive it and benefit by it. Thus some eighteen years elapsed before we were in a position to regularly practise medicine or to establish a hospital in even the most rudimentary form. We were then enabled to erect and equip a building through the help of supporters in Ireland, in honour of whom it was named St. Patrick's Hospital. Crude as this institution is, we are now in a better position to deal with the various cases that arise, especially in the event of an epidemic. The people have also gradually come to realize the benefits which are offered them, and experience has taught us the wisdom of making them pay for any help which they receive from our medical treatment.

During an epidemic of measles—a deadly scourge among a primitive people—which occurred in 1895, our resources were so limited that it is wonderful more lives were not lost. Large numbers died in the outlying villages, while at the mission-station comparatively few deaths took place. The conditions under which we had to work were hard in the extreme. The weather was severe and cold, and there was

no adequate shelter for the sufferers, as we were then building a new station. A great strain was laid on the few white men who had to do the nursing. In the case of the young children we sometimes found it necessary to administer medicine and nourishment by holding open the mouth and injecting it. Those who were in delirium were only prevented from throwing themselves into the river by being tied by the feet to posts. One man who resolutely refused to take any food was threatened with instant burial. Knowing the custom of his people, he at last capitulated, fearing that our threat would be carried out. Our doctor, although he had to divide his time between two camps situated fifty miles apart, succeeded in saving some who but for his skill must have died. Devotion and heroism were not lacking on the part of either the staff or the Indians. The former gladly gave up their food and blankets for the benefit of the sick, and worked day and night, taking but little rest. The most striking case of heroism on the part of the Indians was that of Metegyak, who although himself smitten with the disease, attended to the cutting of firewood and the preparation of food until he fainted away, and had to be carried down to the sick-camp.

During the most recent epidemic of measles things were very different, although we had one hundred and twenty cases to deal with at one time. No deaths took place as the direct result of the disease. The people had by this time become accustomed to our methods, and we were more suitably equipped than formerly.

Only those who know the conditions of life among aboriginal people can form any idea as to the havoc which a new disease causes when introduced among them. About fourteen years after the Paraguayan War of 1865-1870 an epidemic of smallpox devastated the Lengua-Mascoy to such an extent that as far as can be gathered fully one-third

of the population died, and in some of the villages quite two-thirds succumbed to it. Smallpox again visited the country in 1903, but fortunately it was attended with a comparatively small mortality, although a few villages were reported to have been completely devastated. During such visitations the Indians, knowing that few escape if once attacked, carry out their custom of leaving those who are stricken, and of fleeing from the plague by scattering in various directions. It is an attempt at isolation, but their flight, being badly organized, generally tends to the spreading of the disease. Many of them do escape by entirely shutting themselves off from contact with others, and their custom of punishing by death anyone who carries the infection helps to further isolation, which, if only it was properly managed, would soon stamp out any such disease, since the torrid sun acts as a disinfectant, and tropical rains soon complete the cleansing of the land. Nevertheless, the danger is great, and the Indians thoroughly appreciate it.

The influence of Christianity has done much to change the conduct of the people in times of epidemic. One night, as the bell was ringing for evening prayer at the station of Elwatetkuk, a tired messenger arrived with the brief but dreadful news that smallpox had broken out in the west. He reported that many had died, that some lay unburied, and that the tracks of the fugitives were traceable by their belongings, which they had thrown away in their panic. We decided to set off that same night on a relief expedition, and during a short but solemn service volunteers were called for. All responded with eagerness except one, who was a heathen. A certain number were carefully selected, and we then set out on our long journey of more than one hundred miles, through forests and over water-covered tracks, to reach the scene of the disaster. Our Indians knew full well that it might mean death to some of them, and yet without fear and



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without a murmur they cheerfully went to the help of their sick and dying countrymen.

Different as our experience may be from that of most other missions, the fact remains that medical work in the Chaco contributed in a very slight degree, if at all, to opening the way for the Gospel. Its development followed as the result of Christianity; and it was only as the influence of the mission began to tell upon the people, and their confidence in us increased, that they showed any appreciation of our medical knowledge and practice.

I remember the case of a lad called Sangăskuk who had a malformed tooth which caused him great trouble. It was so placed that the pain of extraction necessitated the administration of chloroform. He had sufficient confidence in us to agree to have the operation performed. A crowd gathered round, and when they saw him becoming unconscious they all looked solemn and anxious, and eventually became alarmed, saying that he was dead. The tooth was successfully extracted, and he soon regained consciousness. On being questioned by the people, he informed them that he had felt no pain, but that, on the contrary, while asleep he had experienced most pleasant feelings, believing that he was swimming in the river. They were all most deeply interested, and shortly after quite a number desired to have even sound teeth extracted, on condition that they might enjoy the pleasures of the sleeping medicine.

Many Indians, however, are still shrewd enough to act with great caution, and show a disinclination to be experimented upon until one of their older people shall have proved to them its safety. When Palwa had damaged his eye beyond recovery\* he was told that if the unsightly member was removed a glass eye could be substituted, which would make him look quite presentable, and thus prevent the women

\* See Part II., Chapter VIII., p. 156.



of his tribe from feeling any repulsion for him. He therefore consented, and the eye was removed. Another man, suffering from a similar defect, was asked if he, too, would like to undergo the same operation. He replied with great prudence, saying: "Perhaps I will; but I should like to wait and see how the new eye looks in my friend."

On the stations and in their vicinity the days of opposition to medical treatment have now passed away. The Indians place great reliance in Mr. E. G. Bernau, our medical man. He has proved his capability to them in so many ways, and has often succeeded in saving lives which they had despaired of. He has not only won the people's confidence, but has trained some of the natives themselves in the elementary knowledge of medicine and the proper treatment of diseases common to the country.

To-day there can be seen at Mākthlawaiya a tall, clean-looking Indian woman helping in the palm and mud building which is St. Patrick's Hospital. She acts as native nurse, while her husband fills the post of hospital porter and general assistant. Their duties are to report all cases requiring medical attention, to assist in the treatment of infants, to attend to all minor wounds, and to generally assist the medical officer. They have to take their turn in all cases where nursing is required, and during times of epidemic their lot is a hard and strenuous one. When an operation is in progress and a curious crowd gathers, it has often been found necessary to send a few native police to assist the hospital porter, who is himself a policeman, and crude methods have been resorted to in order to keep the people in check. During the treatment of one serious case the women especially were so excited that the police were instructed to arm themselves with two bucketsful of cold water each with which to douche anyone who approached too near. Generally speaking, however, severe measures are

not necessary, as most of the people now approve of our medical work, and cause us inconvenience only through their curiosity.

The history of the two hospital assistants is interesting. They were by no means a pleasant couple to deal with when I first met them in 1890. The husband was a minor witch-doctor and a renowned specialist in extracting the knuckle-bones of animals from those who were supposed to be thus bewitched. He was of a weak and vacillating disposition, and was steeped in superstitious beliefs. On the other hand, Soyabik-inkyin, as his wife was called, was a strong character, with a peculiarly bitter mischief-making temper, and possessed of a callous, unsympathetic, and cruel nature. She has been guilty of at least two child-murders in our time, and on the last occasion, when accused and censured by me, she defiantly retorted that she was not in the least sorry for her act, and turning aside to her companions, she laughed, and began to play with some puppies which she was carrying. She moreover maintained that she felt no regret or shame for her deed, and that she would repeat it when occasion required. She was the leading woman at immoral feasts and dances, and a maker and dispenser of medicines condemned by all the more enlightened Indians. A pleasant and somewhat good-looking woman, she was one in whom sin did not exhibit a repulsive appearance to the eye, although in reality it was more powerful in her than in the lower and more brutish-looking. She was an evil woman, but intelligent, and could see the advantage of progress. She speedily learned such arts as baking, cooking, and washing, and on the whole she proved reliable and trustworthy.

It was many years before she began to consider Christianity in a serious light, but as is the case with all strong characters, once she had formed her decision she became a sincere, pronounced, and useful Christian.

This movement of employing natives to attend to their sick countrymen, in which these two were the pioneers, is in every way a good and sound one. That an ex-witch-doctor and child-murderer should not only approve of our medical treatment, but actually assist us in it, is a most powerful factor in assuring the doubtful and superstitious—in fact, Soyabik-inkyin is now a trained assistant at maternity cases under the doctor's supervision. We as a community subscribed no less than £30 as an endowment for the support of these two converts, which is proof that their services are valued. It is a triumph of grace that these two have been transformed so late in life from callous savages into useful and sincere Christians. Instances such as this serve to prove the truth of Christianity, and to proclaim the all-saving power of Christ, and the utility and hopefulness of missionary work.

## CHAPTER VI

### THRIFT

IN their natural state the Indians of the Chaco are thriftless to the last degree, being content to live a hand-to-mouth existence, with the crudest of shelters, coarse, tasteless and badly prepared food, and at certain seasons not too plentiful a supply of that. The agriculture carried on by them is hardly worthy of the name, a few garden patches of the most easily grown vegetables being the limit of their enterprise.

The impression generally formed by travellers is that there is no hope for so lazy and thriftless a race, so void of energy and so lacking in any desire to advance, but such a conclusion is unsound, because the observer has not probed to the root of the matter, nor attempted to remedy it.

The whole Indian social system was wrong, and a radical change was necessary before any improvement could be made. The two evils lying at the root of the thriftlessness, laziness, and stagnation of the Indian tribes were, first, a lack of co-operation in work, and secondly, a social condition which had grown up in past generations owing to the force of circumstances, and which sanctioned the sharing in common of all produce and comforts.

Owing to the lack of a properly constituted government, the Indians had drifted into a condition in which every man did what seemed good in his own eyes. Each was on an equal footing with the other, and regarded none as his superior or master, except when it suited him—that is, he

recognized clearly enough superior ability in some, and when he could benefit himself by such recognition, and by submitting to this superior intelligence, he did so. But it was of rare occurrence to find an Indian who had sufficient strength of character and will-power exercising these qualities for good upon his fellows.

The Indian in his primitive state had both sufficient intelligence and material to build himself a very passable hut, but because it involved the co-operation of many, and because they objected to work for another, and resented following the plans and orders of another, such huts could not be built, and consequently the people had to be content with the most miserable booths. The same difficulty presented itself in the case of agriculture, pastoral pursuits, and in fact their whole industrial life.

It is a mistake, however, to think that the Indian is contented and happy in his miserable and degraded state; the truth is rather that he has discovered no way of altering it. Without any training from the missionary the people were capable, even with their primitive appliances, of attaining to a vastly superior state of life than they led, but there existed no co-operation, law, or discipline to bring this about.

As among all peoples there are always to be found a number of incurable idlers content to sponge upon their neighbours, so it was with the Indians, and a mistaken idea of hospitality together with a weakness of character—the result of generations of undisciplined, ungoverned society—served to encourage and protect these parasites of humanity. The natural law is that he who plants should eat of the fruit of his labour, and if of his abundance he gives to those who have need, it should be given voluntarily and not extorted from him. Security of property is the one essential to the progress of any people. Where there is insecurity the inevitable result is that energy, industry, and thrift diminish



or cease to exist. The wild Indian, who is content barely to supply his own wants, only shows his good sense, for, had he more than his neighbours, he would be deprived of such surplus by idlers. He is therefore quite justified in taking life as easily as possible, for why should he toil for another? Had he the option of sharing his abundance with those of whom he approves, it would be different; but to toil and then be practically robbed is no encouragement to him to try to improve his condition.

We who went to these people in order to elevate them spiritually and temporally were therefore bound to become law-makers, without which no progress could possibly have been made. We worked upon Scriptural lines, and taught the people that he who would not work should not eat; that he who stole should steal no more; that six days' labour was as binding as the observance of a day of rest and worship; that time was a precious gift, and that the way in which it was spent had to be accounted for; that it was the duty of every man to provide for those of his own household, and to supply the wants of the sick and needy. We realized, on the other hand, that laws were to a great extent useless if they were too much in advance of the times, and that the only successful means of securing their observance was to educate public opinion to see their justice and advantages. We therefore set ourselves to teach the natives to accept and administer such simple laws as would tend to raise them from the low state into which they had fallen. We, as far as possible, remained in the background, content to guide, instruct, and give moral support to the more intelligent and advanced individuals in order that they might be enabled to work out the destiny of their people.

One of the various ways in which the Indians were taught the necessity of making some attempt towards advancing in social position, and of providing to some extent for their own



THE CARPENTERS' SHOP AT ENMAKTHLAWAIYA



future and for that of their families, may be illustrated by a conversation which I had with Philip, who had at this time decided to renounce infanticide and other racial evils, and to embrace the Christian Faith. I urged upon him at some length the advisability of cultivating a large garden instead of small and scattered plots, so that he and his prospective family might be provided for. He readily realized the advantages of such a course, and I could see by the bright expression on his face that his desire was to follow out my advice. But he sadly answered: "It is no use, the pressure which would be brought to bear upon me by my neighbours to share with them will be too great; so that although I might do as you desire, work hard and plant much, a provision for the future would be impossible." Then changing his tone, he relapsed into the true Indian, and to anyone who did not know him he would appear to be defending his old customs, and to be disapproving of our suggestions. "What you want," he said, "is not in accordance with our custom; it is not the way that we Indians follow. We are not hard-hearted and miserly like you; we do not keep things for ourselves when others are hungry. We do not like to be tired with hard work in order that we may have big huts stored with things." I told him that he knew in his own heart that he did not seriously believe such statements, except the true one that neither he nor his people cared for hard work, and yet that it was one of their chief desires to have a plentiful supply of food. I pointed out to him that we never ate all that was placed on the table, but always reserved part of it for another meal. This was one of our habits which puzzled them greatly. They could not understand why, when we had a good meal before us, we did not enjoy ourselves by consuming the whole. They thought it meanness on our part, a failing which they prided themselves on not possessing.

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I told Philip that it was not because his people were generous that they gave to others, but rather because they were weak and dare not refuse. "You know very well," I said, "that you all dislike the man who will not hunt or fish, and who at evening takes a large share of that which you have worked hard to procure for your little ones; but you are too cowardly to tell him that he ought to work for himself. You are also aware that your people will never advance so long as they remain like the deer, eating grass when and where he finds it, but saving none for times of scarcity; or like the wolf which eats all the eggs of the ostrich, leaving none to be hatched out, and thus secure a future and greater food-supply." It was obvious that he agreed with me, but that he could not see a way out of the difficulty. I then said: "Listen to this proposition. You and I will have a garden between us. I will give you a hoe and some seeds, and you will do all the work; but the fruit of this garden which you plant is to be half yours and half mine. When your people demand a share you can give them such out of your portion, but you must not give them of mine. They are afraid of me, and will not ask me for a share of my fruit. When the garden season is over, both you and they will have no potatoes nor pumpkins, but I shall still have some produce of my part of the garden which you have cultivated. I shall then be able to give you a daily share of my fruit in return for your labour, and this will prove an object-lesson to you and others, showing you that by foresight and self-control it is possible to obtain a better living than by following your native ways."

At last he consented to try the experiment on a small scale, and a plot was planted. I did not divide the garden, but simply made a general claim to half of the produce. Once the fruit ripened, the usual applications for a share were made by his people. But he improved upon my plan by





#### A MID-DAY HALT NEAR A PALM FOREST

The Rev. T. B. R. Westgate, Mr. R. J. Hunt, Sibeth, the Ven. Archdeacon Shemield, and an Indian.



#### THE MISSION HOSPITAL.

The Doctor, E. J. Bernan, with a native nurse and a male attendant, and a native patient.



telling them that I was the senior partner, and that he could neither give of his own share nor of mine without my permission. In so doing he put all the blame upon me, explaining that he himself was generous, but that I was mean. He reminded them that I had a "hard stomach and angry words," and that therefore it would be no use their asking me, and that he himself was too much afraid to make application for them.

This lesson had a good effect. It set them all thinking. It greatly encouraged the more industrious and advanced section, and it equally discouraged the idlers, since they began to realize that as foreign teaching grew in influence and extent, their happy days of feeding at the expense of others were likely in time to cease altogether, and that they must either themselves earn their own bread by the sweat of their brow, or leave their happy homes and sponge upon more distant and less sophisticated tribesmen. It was not till some years after that much improvement was noticeable, but by similar and many other means we little by little gave practical instruction to these primitive people in foresight, industry, and thrift.

Their social condition has undergone a marked improvement, not throughout the country, but among those who have accepted our teaching, and who are now sufficiently numerous and strong to hold their own, since the settlement at Enmākthlawaiya is in every way by far the strongest Indian centre in the whole country. The right of private property has also been firmly established, and although it took years to accomplish these two points, the result is now seen in the rapid advance that is being made by the people, the settled and organized Indians being the wonder and envy of the surrounding tribes. Security of property at once opened up the way to hearty co-operation, and the Indians now readily combine to carry out any work which necessitates

the employment of numbers, being assured that their rights and share in the work done will be guaranteed.

Where formerly the Indian spent a large part of his time lolling in the shade or amusing himself by playing native games, he is now to be found industriously occupied five and a half days in the week, like most of our own countrymen. The carpenter's shop with some fifteen hands, dairy and transport work, bullock-taming, the tending of cattle and the butcher's shop, fencing, well-digging, road-making, building, tanning, weaving, cooking, washing, ironing, and baking, together with many other occupations, are to be seen in full swing every working day at Enmākthlawaiya. The lazy and worthless savage finds no place in this hive of industry.

The growth of our work was such that it was no longer possible to cope with the needs of the people simply as a mission. In 1900 a loan was made to me of £1,300 (upon which interest was to be paid), in order to found an industrial enterprise which would afford training to the Indians and provide them with better means of livelihood. Land was generously loaned for the same purpose on the Riacho Negro. This enterprise, the Paraguayan Chaco Indian Association, was so successful that in 1905 a new company, registered in London under the title of "The Chaco Indian Association, Ltd.," was founded with a capital of £10,000.

Contemporaneously with this movement we encouraged the Indians to take up the question of their own development more seriously, with the result that a savings bank was established among them. This movement was the outcome of an address on "Thrift" at a native social gathering in June, 1905. A few men were induced to deposit with us a dollar (Paraguayan) a week, and thus form a little savings bank, a small bonus being promised at the end of the year to those who paid in regularly. A few of the more intelligent

leading the way, others followed their example, and at the end of the year 1907 the subscribers had some \$2,000 in hand, most of the Indians preferring to keep in the bank the money they had saved. By this time there was a prospect of some twenty-five regular subscribers of one or two dollars a week, and we felt it was necessary to seek some profitable investment for them.

Consequently, the mission staff and the most intelligent of the native subscribers were summoned to a meeting, at which it was proposed to raise a loan of some \$10,000, without interest, to give the people a start by purchasing some cattle for them, the loan to be paid off as native subscriptions came in.

Cattle were bought, and those natives who had any of their own were induced to join the little company, the animals being valued at the current price, and the amount added to their subscriptions.

The staff and Indians raised \$3,000 for the support of the native hospital nurse and porter, in order that the mission might have the benefit of these helpers free of cost to the central office at home. Special donations were also given for the support of a native school-teacher and evangelist.

Money which had been collected by the Church members for the building of a new church was lying without earning interest, and this was taken over at the usual rate until such time as it should be needed. To encourage the parents to pay in for their children, and as an object-lesson in providence for the future, some members of the staff put in a small subscription for the children, one member subscribing £100 as a loan, free of interest, to be paid out when the total shares—viz., 500 at \$100 each—shall have been completely taken up. This enabled us to purchase more cattle, which we calculated would produce at the least 12 per cent. per annum; 1 per



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cent. is paid out regularly on the first of the month, in order to give confidence, to create interest, and to stimulate greater thrift. The Indians have surprised us in the amount that they have subscribed, their private shares exceeding \$20,000, and, with the various funds belonging to them as a community and the fences and buildings which they also possess, amounting to between £900 and £1,000.

Having secured cattle, our next step was to train Indians to trade in skins and feathers, bartering beads, knives, and other articles of utility and adornment in exchange. Two young men were supplied with shops, and trading goods were advanced to the value of \$2,000 each. A few articles were apportioned to another, so that he could send out parcels by his friends when returning from a visit to the mission-station. These bartered his goods for him, bringing back the feathers, etc., on their next visit. In addition to the individual benefit to the trader, this native trading movement acts as a check against unscrupulous Europeans entering the Chaco and contaminating the natives.

Some of the people now occupy an independent position. Their gardens supply them with vegetables, and their bank interest with meat, which, together with a little hunting and fishing, enables them to live quite independently of the mission.

At the end of 1908 the cattle were counted and a small bonus was given out to the shareholders, fresh books were opened, and the "Bank" established.

In the year 1908 the Chaco Indian Association, Ltd., was converted into a purely business concern with a capital of £70,000, the former shareholders becoming debenture holders in the new company. This company has since been liquidated, and is now in private hands, the old debenture holders having been paid off in full. A limited number of natives are still employed by this private company, which continues the friend

of the mission, and works together with it in perfect harmony and with the good of the Indians in view.

On the private shares of the Indians interest has been paid at 12 per cent., but the enterprise has been so profitable that a considerable sum has been devoted to a reserve fund, so that every share is now worth double. A more satisfactory business state of affairs could hardly be desired.

We have not been blind to the fact that advancement, industry, and thrift require to be modified in some ways. Thrift carried to excess leads to miserliness and selfishness, whereas industry for the sake of gain might develop into a form of self-slavery, and might rob these people of the just joy and pleasure of life. A too rapid advance might upset their equilibrium, and cause them to be unduly conceited, and to look down upon their less advanced fellows, for some of the more thrifty are to-day worth £50, which to an Indian is a fortune. But we have guarded against all these possibilities. Indians are bound by the rules of the station to pay a certain sum for the education of their children and for medical attendance. The burden of maintaining the aged, sick, or otherwise incompetent members is laid upon the community. Law-breakers are fined by the native police, and all are bound to contribute to the general order and cleanliness of the settlement. The maintenance of their Church is a charge upon the natives, who also have to contribute to the hospitable entertainment of their Indian visitors.

From time to time bands are sent out on hunting expeditions, so that they may not break too suddenly from their old method of life. This has the advantage of reminding them of the half-animal life from which they have been reclaimed, and thus enables them to sympathize with their less fortunate companions, and on their return to appreciate more fully the comforts of a settled life and home. Periodical trading expeditions, friendly visits, or evangelistic tours serve to keep

up their connection with, and interest in, their still primitive brethren.

As far as possible we leave the whole development of Indian life in their own hands, but, as is only reasonable, we must continue to supervise and direct this development for some years to come.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE endeavour to raise a primitive people to a higher level too rapidly is an error into which missionaries may easily fall. The natural turn of mind of the European is to regard with impatience, if not contempt, the seemingly stupid, meaningless, and childish recreations of primitive man; and great pressure is exercised by supporters at home to induce the missionary to hasten the acceptance of European civilization and methods of thought by those whom they desire to benefit.

In order to prosecute his work successfully the missionary must of necessity secure support from home; but unfortunately there are many interested in missionary work who can only appreciate success in so far as the converts attain to their particular form of culture and of moral and religious views, and a work which might well occupy generations is expected to be accomplished in a few years. Our experience has been that the more advanced natives instinctively seek to copy and aspire to the views of their foreign leaders, and come to look down upon their former barbaric ways, but that the mass of the people are not so easily moved. The only successful method of leavening the whole is to allow the few more forward spirits to advance according to their capacity, but at the same time not to unduly hasten the improvement of the mass. In theory we believe that this is a sound policy, but on a small station the carrying of it into

practice becomes a difficult matter, and we have to confess that the success which we have met with among the few has, to some extent, had a retarding and repelling effect upon the many.

It is not possible to have one mission-station set apart entirely for the heathen and another for the Christians. The Christian, still weak and undisciplined, and with no large capacity of view, as is to be expected after only a few years' influence, has a tendency to separate himself too much from his people, not merely in his Christian life, but in ordinary social intercourse. The heathen cannot keep pace, and objects to be forced into practically changing his whole system of life and ceasing to be an Indian altogether. The result is a tendency to separation, and injury to the general work of evangelization and gradual uplifting. What we have aimed at is to try and get the native Christian, while abstaining from the evils prevalent among his countrymen, nevertheless to live and move among them as an uplifting power. The forces of heathenism, however, are so strong and deeply rooted that the Christian Indian instinctively realizes the danger of his own submersion, through not having sufficient strength of character to hold his own against the heavier odds.

Many schemes calculated to develop and improve the people have been set on foot with fair prospects of success, but have to a great extent failed through sheer inability to keep them moving steadily. In a small band of missionaries gifts and talents vary. Only one man may have the gift of being able to lead the people onward successfully in a certain groove. When, in the course of duty, he has to be moved for a time and has to devote himself to other work, for lack of a man with like gifts to replace him the special branch of work which he inaugurated and carried on must naturally suffer. Among such a people as these Indians continuity and steady



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perseverance, together with unlimited patience, is the one combination of qualities necessary to insure success along any one line.

The organization of a new social system requires so many gifts and so much time that it is utterly impossible, with only a small band of workers, adequately to fulfil the claims called for. As it is, each man has perforce to play many parts, and to any thinking person it will not be difficult to see that under the circumstances success cannot attend every effort.

Following my report to the Paraguayan Government relative to the progress of the mission, I was ordered to make an official notification to them of the foundation of all stations with their populations, and also of the district over which we wielded influence. A map was drawn up at the request of the Government, and was adopted, and the missions of our Society were forthwith placed under the official protection of the Government. The President informed me that the time had come when Paraguayan authority must be exercised over the mission. For many years previously I had held office under the Government as Commissioner of the Chaco; but now that some of the clans had taken to a settled life, and had established themselves permanently in certain localities, the President said that it was necessary for the maintenance of law and order that a Paraguayan officer supported by a small number of soldiers should be located at the missions. That officer, he said, would of course be placed under my authority in my civil capacity as Commissioner. The reasons he gave for requiring this step to be taken were that the missions might be protected and their property secured, and that the authority of Paraguay might be adequately represented.

The President's decision was according to law, but I represented to His Excellency the difficulties that might arise

from the presence of soldiers in the Chaco, since from the nature of the circumstances they would have much idle time on their hands. I also assured him that as far as protection went their aid was quite unnecessary at that time. He very kindly stated that it was the Government's desire to accommodate us in all things possible, but he said that it was necessary that the Indians should become accustomed to considering themselves Paraguayan citizens, especially as the Government had agreed to the admission of the younger generation to such rights, and a Civil Registry Office had been granted us for that purpose. I still endeavoured to avoid having the military established in our midst, as it might have had an evil effect upon the Indians, and have given rise to misunderstandings. Eventually it was arranged that if I appointed a certain number of trustworthy Indians to act as a native police force, the Government would be content with that instead of sending their own soldiery. In accordance with the wishes of the Government a small number of Indians were set apart for police duties, and were supplied with uniforms from the War Office; but as there was no necessity to exercise force in the mission, their duties were merely nominal.

It is quite easy to understand that these Indian police, recruited as they were from a people who a few years ago had been savages, could not be expected to fulfil the purpose of their creation till after some years of training. The organization of this force was altogether a foreign idea to the people, and it would have given rise to serious complications had we entrusted the police with much power to begin with. Nor did the Government imagine or require that they should be used immediately as a regular trained police force. The movement was no more than a tentative one, with the object of training and fitting the people to take upon themselves the duties of citizenship. Each member of the force

was a picked man, belonged to the native Church, and was chosen rather for his Christian conduct of life than for any other qualification.

There were some at home who objected to the whole idea of a police force, because it was apt to engender, so they said, a military spirit among the people. Any common-sense person, however, must admit that no civilized community could exist for long without some kind of police force. An army and navy are, after all, merely magnified police organizations. It is the duty of every Christian nation to avoid as much as possible having recourse to force ; but until the end of the present dispensation and the advent of the millennium, whenever that may be, it is quite clear that mankind as a whole will not be in a position to exist without civil authority and force to back that authority. Until the spirit of Christianity pervades the world, such a measure as the abolition of the police force or of the navy and army is impossible, for national ambitions and selfishness, as well as class hatred and greed, have as yet shown no signs of declining ; on the contrary, rather, they have shown a tendency to increase.

Among the Indians of the Chaco circumstances and customs were such that moral influence and persuasion made it almost unnecessary to have recourse to physical force ; but it was quite clear that, as the people developed, and came into contact with the outside world, they would soon learn from so-called Christians such evil tendencies as would eventually lead to the necessity for stricter government, which, in order to have effect, would have to be backed by physical force. The organization of government among the Lengua-Mascoy, carried out and enforced by themselves, tended much more to peace than if the authority and its force had been of foreign origin. It must, however, be remembered that, apart altogether from the introduction of

a Europeanized form of civil control, backed by a Europeanized police force, the Indians had from time immemorial looked upon every man as a soldier when necessary. We did not live among a millennial people by any means. Every man was armed, and every man was prepared to fight when called upon. Their social condition, it is true, tended to the maintenance of peace and the avoidance of bloodshed among members of the same tribe, but with those whom they considered enemies their instincts to kill were as strong as among any other people. The restriction, therefore, of authority to a chosen few, and the careful organization of it, tended more to peace than the leaving of the right to punish offences in the hands of every and any man who could use his own individual judgment (not always correct) as to whether the offence was justifiable or not.

Up to the present our circumstances have been such that no exhibition of open force has been necessary, and so the native police have been used entirely for pacific purposes. Their main duties were to see that the few laws and regulations of the station were carried out, that visitors coming and going were duly reported, to investigate petty theft and any other misdemeanours, so that they could lay a report before those in authority, who were empowered to censure, impose fines, or banish the culprit from the district for a period.

Among such tribes as the Chiriguanos, Matacos, and others, where there exists very little regard for human life, a powerful governing authority is absolutely necessary. Among such peoples, where it is not uncommon to see men cutting at each other with knives, and where murders are of an appallingly frequent occurrence, and among whom severe faction fights take place in which numbers are engaged, it would be absurd for any authority to intervene unless armed and prepared to use such arms. It is the lack of sufficient





BISHOP EVERY AND THE CHACO MISSION STAFF



SCHOOLROOM AND CHURCH AT NAKTETINGMA

The structure and furniture are of palm logs.





discipline and force which permits of such barbarities being carried out in the more remote parts of the republics.

I unhesitatingly say that there is no portion of the republics of Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay so remote from strongly established authority as the interior of the Paraguayan Chaco, and yet there are few parts of South America where life and property are so safe as among the Lengua-Mascoy Indians. Nevertheless, the increasing expansion of civilization is already altering this desirable state of things, although as yet only to a very small extent. The more reason, therefore, was there that the people should be taught and trained to exercise wise and strong government, and thus be the better able to cope with the circumstances of the altering state of social life. I must confess that we have erred in not more strenuously developing the knowledge of wise and sound government among the Indians, and if the native police have not been brought to as high a level as they might, the blame lies greatly with us, their instructors, who have had a free hand and full authority to instruct them.

The native policeman is lacking neither in moral nor physical courage when sufficiently backed by his superiors, as may be illustrated by one of many instances which occurred at the Pass Station. The local law of that Indian community was that no witchcraft should be practised within a certain distance of its boundaries. On a certain night a large party of outside Indians made a daring and defiant attempt to practise their sorceries in their temporary encampment quite close to the station, and that upon a woman who was considered as a mission Indian. As soon as the chanting was heard and the circumstances fully known, Mǎngweomai, a newly recruited policeman, immediately on his own initiative, and unarmed, set out for the encampment, and in the name of the local authority commanded the witch-doctors to at

once cease their sorceries, or, night-time as it was, strike their camp and move beyond the boundary. They were a powerful gang, and naturally resented his interference, but sulkily submitted. The mission had little or no influence over this certain party, yet they respected the native law of the community, and quite realized that this one representative of it would be backed by his people, and could, if necessary, enforce his commands.

As is only to be expected among a primitive people such as that from which this tentative police force was recruited, it was not at all uncommon to meet with ludicrous and strange incidents. The uniforms supplied to the police were originally made for the Paraguayan military, who are much smaller men than the Lengua-Mascoy. This rendered it necessary for us to select, as far as possible, small-built Indians for the police force, but some of the more stalwart candidates were so eminently fitted for such a post that their claims could not be overlooked. Some big policemen, therefore, could be seen clothed in a most inadequate uniform, with trouser-legs far too short, and tunics so small that they not only found it impossible to wear anything underneath, but could not button them except in a few places.

Like all primitive people, their love for this distinctive and European dress was so great that it was their custom, until they were discovered, to sleep in their uniforms at night. They were accordingly ordered to bring them at sunset to the house of one of the staff, where they were left in safe-keeping until the morrow.

The chief of the Paisiamtawa clan, a fine-looking old man with long wavy hair, when appointed as a member of the force, was not to be denied his full uniform. On going to the store to be given his outfit, no helmet could be found large enough. A brilliant idea occurred to him. He promptly retired to his hut, where he cut off his locks close,

and thus shorn, he returned to be again fitted, this time with success.

On a journey of any length, no matter what its object, if a policeman was a member of the party, he never forgot his uniform, carefully guarding it against the weather. He invariably halted outside each village to divest himself of his native garb, and proudly don his official uniform.

In spite, however, of such peculiarities, their obedience and attention to their duties were evident to all. Their general bearing and prompt answer to the call of the whistle so impressed a high Paraguayan military officer that he remarked how proud he would be to be in command of such men.

The reader will have already formed an idea of the Indian's dread of anything pertaining to the supernatural. To them ghosts are very real, and any attempt to oppose them requires more courage and entails more danger than facing any number of men, however hostile. A scare which occurred at the Pass Station severely put to the test the courage of the native police in the face of the supernatural. One dark night the few policemen stationed there were called upon to pursue a supposed ghost which was reported to be rushing about the settlement, upsetting every obstacle, and even entering houses. It was evident that there was something more or less substantial about this scare, for even some of the English experienced a strange feeling of dread. It was the duty of the police to investigate the cause of alarm, in order to endeavour to tranquillize the fears of the people, and to be in a position to assure them either that there was no spirit at large, or that at any rate under their protection their fears could be allayed. Hastily roused from their sleep, they promptly donned their uniforms and gave chase. Their efforts, however, were not successful in a capture. It appears that in reality the ghost was an Indian madman who had visited the village in a nude condition, and who, it was

reported, had dug up his father's dead body and was carrying one of his leg bones about with him, which he stood and gnawed at intervals in his mad peregrinations. It was therefore not without some reason that the whole station was upset, as such persons often are possessed with homicidal mania.

Shortly after the foundation of the settlement at Näktetingma, the rudiments of a municipal government were added to the police force then existing. Indians were appointed to the various positions of judge, mayor, police magistrate, sanitary and school inspectors, and suchlike, a member of the staff assisting each Indian official in instructing him in his duties. This organization will in time not only become compulsory, but is a most useful development in the social life of the Indian. So far it has not been attended with great success owing to difficulties over which we had no control. A serious break was caused in the carrying out of the project by the compulsory removal of the station from Näktetingma to Enmäkthlawaiya, and this at a time when it was gaining a hold on the people. There was also the difficulty of keeping the Indian officials and the members of the staff assisting them as permanent residents. Itinerating work, transport duties, and like demands necessitated their continual movement.

The duties of the judge, mayor, and magistrate were for the most part nominal, but there were occasions when they were called upon to exercise them. One in particular, and the first since the inauguration of the so-called "municipal council," deserves some comment. Two Indians had been arrested by the police on suspicion of having broken into a store with intent to steal. On the day appointed for their trial the Indians were assembled in the schoolroom at Näktetingma to witness this the first public and formal trial on more or less European lines. The whole idea of a trial of any organized



nature was altogether foreign to them, but now their newly appointed officials were to sit in judgment upon two of their own tribesmen. They had been previously coached by the members of the staff appointed to assist them; but would they have the moral courage to conduct the trial on impartial lines, and to pass sentence if necessary? This was a question which caused us no little anxiety.

The prisoners were conducted into the room by the police, and were given seats in front of the platform on which sat Manuel, the judge, with his English assistant, and likewise Kyemapăpăńko-ăkyăkye, the mayor. The prisoners, in conducting their own defence, were severely cross-questioned by the police, Philip and Metegyak especially showing great intelligence and subtlety in their inquiry, which proved the guilt of the prisoners beyond any doubt. Eventually Manuel rose from his chair to sum up and pass sentence. Attired only in his native blanket, with ostrich plumes adorning his head, he presented a striking figure standing erect with his arms folded across his broad, naked chest. For some moments he stood in silence, evidently feeling the gravity of his position. Expecting a few hesitating and timorous remarks, we were in no way prepared for the fluency and eloquence of his address, which lasted for over half an hour. When his assistant on one occasion thought fit to prompt him, he turned round sharply, and disdainfully replied that he was coming to that point in the course of time and in its proper place. Addressing the prisoners before him, he spoke to them at one time in words of censure, at another in a fatherly tone, reviewing their past history, and the advantages they had received in their Christian upbringing, impressing upon them the enormity of their crime, and the shame they ought to feel for the disgrace they had brought upon themselves and the community. In conclusion he urged them to receive the sentence which he was about to pass on

them as a just one, and to work out their term of punishment, bearing no malice, but with the resolve to lead honest and Christian lives for the future. He then sentenced the elder prisoner to two months', and the younger to one month's, hard labour—that is, work without pay.

Evidently no malice was borne, for on the day following the trial and sentence, the younger prisoner was seen turning a grindstone for his former judge, who was sharpening his axe. Both were on the best of terms with each other, and were carrying on an animated conversation. It was not an uncommon sight to see this Indian judge returning home from the swamp, most scantily clothed, and carrying a large bundle of fish, but when exercising his office his demeanour was grave, solemn, and important, and the simple life he led did not in the least interfere with the people according him the respect due to his position.

There is no doubt that even the small amount of disciplinary training in self-government which these people have received has influenced them greatly, and has left a lasting mark upon them. It has developed in them an *esprit de corps*, and has filled them not only with a sense of the dignity and responsibility of office, but has opened their eyes to the possibilities of their future.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INNOVATIONS

THE abandonment of the old central station at Waikth-latingmāngyalwa for the new settlement founded at Nāktetingma (a more suitable site a few miles distant) marked an important epoch in the history of both the Church and the social life of the Lengua-Mascoy. The building of the new station was planned on a larger and more elaborate scale than formerly—as the name “Nāktetingma,” or “Long Village,” implies—and with it dawned an enlarged outlook of life for the Indian, which called for various changes, developments, and innovations. This was the case as much in their forms of amusement as in the more serious phases of life. To many of the more advanced Indians the feast and dance, as well as other purely native amusements and recreations, had lost much of their old charm, which is not surprising, inasmuch as many of the evils connected with them had been prohibited.

Our policy was never to censure or attempt to abolish any native form of recreation which was not essentially bad, or which, even if it contained elements of evil, was capable of modification. But the long duration of their feasts, together with the many vices associated with them, had such a demoralizing effect upon the life of the people that when these were of necessity curtailed little of their old attraction was left. We were therefore compelled to introduce higher and

more beneficial forms of entertainment to fill this blank in their lives.

It was difficult to devise something which would combine instruction with amusement, and at the same time afford variety, so essential to the constitution of the mind of the Indian, who is quite incapable of concentrating his attention for long on any one theme. Several suggestions and ideas were put forward, which were eventually formulated in what the Indians aptly term "Nimpathlākthlāma-ingkyitkowuk" ("The mingling together of us young people," or, in other words, a "social evening"). Primarily, it was an association formed among the younger men and lads with the view of imparting useful knowledge to them in the form of lectures, and of discovering latent talent by giving the Indians the larger share in the proceedings, which at the same time possessed the advantage of giving them a greater interest in what was their own function. Different Indians, in their turn, were selected to act as chairman, and a native secretary was appointed whose duty it was to make up the evening's programme and to act as master of the ceremonies.

These gatherings were held once a week, and periodically the more serious meetings were relieved by an evening's entertainment to which all members of the community were invited. A more picturesque and unique assembly it would be difficult to witness, especially on a clear, moonlit night, when the entertainment is given in the open air. A large circle is formed by the men, women, and children, who seat themselves tailorwise on the ground. Their dark, half-naked forms, lit up by the bright moon, contrast weirdly with their many-coloured blankets, ornaments, and feather head-dresses, and a large fire on the outskirts of the circle, casting its flickering shadows in and around, completes a strange scene which it is the lot and privilege of few Europeans to witness. In the centre sits the Indian chairman and others who are to

take part in the evening's proceedings. On his announcing the opening hymn, specially composed for these occasions, all rise to sing—

Selpithtetomo annoksa inningkoo,  
Ningmahangkuk Netin maa,  
Jesu Cristo mehek Wischi Inginkuk,  
Inningkoo nelanekha, etc.

*Chorus.*

Nathlapak ! Ninthlinga !  
Nimpathläkthläma-ingkyitkowuk  
Ningmahangkuk maa ! Netin maa !  
Äphäkthla Wischi Inginkuk.

which being translated is :

We are soldiers all, yes, truly soldiers all ;  
We are travelling heavenwards on.  
Jesus Christ our Chief is very, very strong,  
And we're His followers all.

*Chorus.*

All on foot ! Marching on !  
Young men united in a band,  
We are travelling on ! heavenwards on !  
To the mansion of our Chief !

This hymn, sung with heartiness and with a swing appropriate to the martial spirit of the words, at once affords a striking contrast to the monotonous, discordant, and tuneless dirges, devoid of any words, which accompany their feastedances, and are chanted incessantly from sunset to sunrise. After the offering of a short opening prayer by one of the Indians, the native secretary is called upon to read the minutes of the last meeting. Then follows a varied programme, composed chiefly of gramophone selections, native songs, a "kiltinnaikha" (Indian story), and a lecture on some instructive subject given by a member of the staff, at the conclusion of which the remarks are briefly discussed.



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During the whole of the proceedings the cup of yerbaté, or Paraguayan tea, the Indians' favourite form of refreshment, is passed round from mouth to mouth. It is the special duty of one of the company to look after the boiling of the kettle and the replenishing of the cup, or rather cowhorn, from which the beverage is sucked through a metal tube called a "bombilla." A dole of tobacco is also served out, and, like the maté cup, the pipe is passed round, each taking a few draws before handing it to his neighbour.

The demeanour of the audience contrasts very markedly with that of a European gathering. Indians do not wait for the conclusion of a song or story to applaud, but from beginning to end they are making comments and uttering ejaculations in a very audible tone, which do not seem in the least to distract the performer or the attention of the listeners.

The gramophone, or "machina" as they term it, always provides much amusement, and proves a great attraction to outside visitors, once they have been assured that the strange sounds are not caused, as they at first think, by "a little devil in the box."

One of the few native songs which have been composed for them, and which they appreciate most, is considered an essential part of the programme. It is their national song, and was written with the purpose of affording them a link with the past. An Indian is inherently patriotic, and since his mode of life was undergoing radical changes, it was thought advisable to compose an air which would remind him of olden days. The words of this patriotic song, set to the tune of "The Boys of the Old Brigade," are as follows:

1. Săpkilmahak elyipmaik năno  
Ninghothlăma yinnăkte?  
Enthlit āpmaikha năk him ānko,  
Pithpath kilwinăkte.

Molwānkaiyam enthlit meho,  
 Molwānkaiyam pithpath,  
 Sāpkilmahak elyipmaik nano,  
 Enthlit kilyithwase?

2. Sāpkilmahak kyitkowuk nāno,  
 Āphaikha ñat inthlānkuk?  
 Enthlit tāmkaikha nāk him ānko,  
 Natingma inginkuk.  
 Molwānkaiyam āpkyitkowuk,  
 Molwānkaiyam ningho,  
 Sāpkilmahak kyitkowuk nāno,  
 Enthlit kilyithwase?

3. Yāksāktaha eyawānko nāk,  
 Kilana ningyesikso?  
 Nintāthniekthla inkilanāk  
 Natingma inningkoo.  
 Molwānkaiyam kilana nāk,  
 Molwānkaiyam inkyin.  
 Tasik kilana inkyana thla,  
 Enthlit kilyithwase.

4. Tasik ningokthla nāk inningkoo,  
 Kiltasik āpkyitkowuk.  
 Mehek annoksa enthlit nāno,  
 Gaihek kilan-etkuk.  
 Yākso enthlit kilaimakpo,  
 Yākso enthlit mehe,  
 Lengua annoksa wisaia maa,  
 Enthlit kilyithwase.

*Chorus.*

Nāk enthlit inginko nelwisaia,  
 Enthlit inginko—meho!  
 Tasik thlinka! Pitpath ningma!  
 Ninghowuk elyipmaik nāno.

Translation:

1. Where are our fathers of long ago,  
 Our neighbours so hard and strong?  
 The men that handled day by day  
 The bows that were so long.  
 We'll not forget the men so strong,  
 We'll not forget the bow.  
 Where are our fathers of long ago,  
 The men, the red-skin men?

2. Where are the youngsters of long ago,  
Who dwelt 'neath our simple dome?  
The men that laboured day by day  
About our village home.  
We'll not forget the men so young,  
We'll not forget our chums.  
Where are the youngsters of long ago  
The men, the red-skin men?
  
3. What makes the women so expert,  
The women in our midst?  
"That which we enter" (our dress) they make  
In our native dwelling-place.  
We'll not forget the women, no,  
We'll not forget the dames.  
Good are the women, the mothers of  
The men, the red-skin men.
  
4. Good is our country, our native land,  
Good are the boys and youths.  
Strong, very strong were the men of old,  
Strong are the maidens, too.  
Who are the men so proud and great,  
Who are the men so strong?  
Really and truly the Lenguas are  
The men, the red-skin men.

*Chorus.*

Yes, we are called "The Men!" that's our name,  
We are the men so strong!  
Marching along! holding our bows!  
Like our fathers of long ago.

Imagine yourselves standing under the clear starlit sky and gazing on this strange circle of red-skin men and women formed in a large open space cleared in the forest scrub, with the grey palm buildings and huts of the station dotted here and there in the background; and as in the stillness of the tropical night these strange words, sung in that well-known strain with such enthusiasm and pride, greet your ears, you are filled with a sense of wonder and exhilaration. And "Who are these singers?" you ask. Men and women who

have but recently been reclaimed from savagery and heathenism by the power of the Gospel—men who are now rejoicing in their improved conditions and a new hope in life, and yet are not forgetful of the prowess of bygone days and the stock from which they have originated.

In order to see a Lengua-Mascoy Indian at his best, and to be able to judge of his gifts of speech, mimicry, humour, and impersonation, no better opportunity can be afforded than by listening to a "Kiltinnaikha." There are few Indians who cannot tell a story of folklore, or graphically describe some tragic or comic incident of travel and the chase. In these they abound, and are careful to enter into the minutest details. In recounting their narratives they have a peculiar style of their own, characterized by short, jerky sentences, all of which are accompanied by the most realistic gesticulations, making it almost possible to follow the gist of the story even without hearing the words.

The chairman calls upon one of the audience (who may or may not have been previously notified) to give a "Kiltinnaikha." He promptly walks to the centre of the open space, and almost invariably hitches up his blanket in preparation for what is to follow. After violently clearing his throat there is a pause, generally followed by the remark, "Mowānchi koo seltinnaikha kyis āthtaa, yitse aāthkuk koo" (I am not able to tell my story to-night; I have a bitter tongue), which is their way of expressing the familiar "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking." After another pause, during which he again clears his throat, he abruptly remarks, as if a sudden idea had occurred to him, "Ekyiso seltinnaikha kyis āthtaa" (This is my story to-night), and forthwith he enters with animation into his narrative, so infecting his listeners as to call forth all sorts of audible remarks and cries during the telling of it. Often, without waiting for applause or leaving his place, he, as a matter of

course, calmly proceeds to narrate another adventure, introducing it with the remark, "Mok seltinnaikha" (This is my next story). It is not unusual for him to continue with another until requested to resume his seat, which he immediately does without taking any offence.

One old man in particular, who excelled all others in the telling of comic experiences and adventures, and who, once he had begun, was very difficult to stop, always kept his audience convulsed with laughter and on the tiptoe of expectation. The people soon adopted our custom of clapping their hands as a sign of approval; and it was not uncommon to see this old man, overcome with the ovation accorded him, bowing himself to his seat, where on sitting down he would enthusiastically clap his hands as a further tribute to his genius.

Towards the close of the programme the chairman announces the item of the evening—a lecture on some subject tending to widen their knowledge of the civilized world, and which can be made applicable to their own case. Thus an opportunity is afforded to the staff of dealing with many subjects which are not suitable at a distinctly religious gathering. Each member in his turn speaks on some topic, such as "Thrift," "London," "A Coal-mine," "House-building," "Botany," "Agriculture," and "The History of Nations." Various trades and occupations have been discussed; and when we contemplated introducing some new industry, such as the weaving of saddle-cloths, the tanning of hides, or cheese-making, we prepared the way by giving a course of lectures on such subjects; and not until we were satisfied (judging by the discussions which followed) that they had reached a certain point of enthusiasm, and had themselves begun to urge upon us the introduction of such new industries, did we actually set them afoot. In this way success was assured, as the movement appeared to come from





THE FIRST SCHOOL AMONG THE LENGUAS  
Begun and taught by Mr. Hunt.



the people themselves instead of being forced upon them, and they accordingly took more pride and interest in it. It is significant that both the institution of the Indian Bank and the development of the "Nimpathlākthlāma-ingkyitkowuk" were directly the outcome of an address on "Thrift."

These social gatherings, which have become so popular, have gradually weaned the people from their former tastes in puerile amusements, and as they are always brought to a close at ten o'clock, the evils attendant upon their all-night dances and feasts are avoided.

Although instruction for women in the rudiments of various useful arts and crafts had been introduced at an early date in the history of the mission, it was not until 1906 that any distinct and organized attempt was made to promote the development of the social condition of the Indian women and girls, although the few missionaries' wives had, previous to this date, done much towards improving native womanhood. For some years past Indian women had been employed as domestic servants, and had received some instruction in washing, ironing, sewing, cooking, and baking bread, but the advent of a trained nurse who gave up her whole time to this particular work hastened the development and progress of the female section of the population, and eighteen months later this department was further reinforced by the services of another lady worker. A start was made with the unmarried girls, who were formed into an industrial school, from which they were gradually drafted as domestic servants in the houses of the married missionaries.

The bald statement that these girls have been taught such and such a handicraft or industry scarcely affords any idea to the uninitiated of what has had to be experienced and endured both by pupil and teacher, so very different are both the conditions and circumstances, as well as the material upon which the teacher has to work, from those existing in the

home land. Imagine the would-be pupil, an Indian girl of fifteen years, a picturesque enough figure with her lank black hair and soft brown skin, naked to the waist, adorned only with fantastic strings of shells, animals' teeth, feathers, or beads, yet the wild look in her eyes, coupled with her general primitive appearance, only serving to show at a glance the typical child of the forest. Though curious as to the strange ways of the white folk, she evinces no great ambition to learn them. To her wild, free spirit, accustomed only to the bare necessities of life, and unrestricted by any conventionalities, there is no fascination in methodical habits and regular hours. At first she may be willing to try from sheer curiosity, and not because she sees in increased knowledge the corresponding increase of power, possessions, and comforts. She has no great desire, at first, even for the bread which she has helped to bake. To her, that which the women of her village make by the somewhat unusual method of first carefully chewing, and afterwards pounding, the bean of the "algarobo" tree into hard, flat cakes, is more familiar and, to her mind, certainly superior; while the preliminary thorough washing of the hands and person to remove the often very visible traces of fat or fish, which is insisted on by the teacher, is unpleasant, and seems quite unnecessary. The elaborate process of washing clothes in a tin basin, using several changes of water, and afterwards boiling them in a kerosine tin, means hard work, and she regards it as no better than her own way of rinsing her garment, without soap, in a dirty pool from which the water-supply for the community is obtained. The idea of washing cooking utensils and dishes, instead of letting the dogs lick them as has been her wont, is a new one, and her first attempt at cleanliness is likely to prove as crude. A plate washed with water squirted from her mouth, and wiped with her blanket worn as clothing, has been good enough for her, and she can see no reason why she should be told to do other-

wise. In the same way the very meagre and simple arrangements of the kitchen appear to her too complicated.

Let me introduce the reader to such a kitchen, and to some of the intricacies of Chaco cooking and cooks, as experienced by the teacher. The walls of the building are composed of palm trunks placed upright, side by side. The gaps are sometimes filled up with clay, and, as chimneys are unknown, your eyes suffer considerably from the smoke, which, however, has the advantage of being sufficiently dense to keep mosquitoes at a distance. If not clayed, the frequent storms sweep right through the holes in the walls, swamping everything, and making the mud floor somewhat like a quagmire. Then the dogs, cats, and hens, being so exceedingly thin, can all squeeze through the crevices caused by the irregularities of the palm trunks, and they have an irritating habit of taking meat even out of pots boiling on the fire. At first you think that by freely expressing your opinion on the subject, and by the frequent and skilful use of a stick, you will succeed in convincing both the dogs and their owners that their presence is not desired. Alas ! in course of time, though your ideas do not alter, language may be wellnigh exhausted, and energy flags, but the dogs still come.

The approach from your house to your kitchen sometimes is mud and water at least ankle-deep, and you must balance yourself carefully on that palm trunk. At night it is awkward, as buckets of water stand just in the doorway. It is one of the curious habits of the Indian to put things there. The cooking is done on that raised platform of palms and clay in pots hung on pieces of bent wire from the cross-pole above. There, in the embers, bread, meat, and cakes are cooked under three-legged pots turned up side down.

There is your cook, a merry, careless girl, married, and a great gossip. That is her two-year-old baby sitting in the thrown-out ashes, playing with a lighted pipe and a long



knife. The mother usually carries it resting on her hip and tucked under one arm, while she performs wonderful feats with the other. That basin of cold, greasy water is to wash up in, and that dirty towel, which she often wears to church tied round her waist, is to dry with. That spoon, almost covered in the ashes, is the one you have lost for days. The frying-pan (containing the fat of the last fry), cups, sauce-pans, the cloth for cleaning the milk-buckets, and the baby's frock are lying there in a heap on the floor, together with the dish-cloth and the family comb, and yet this is not for the want of nails on which to hang them. The rice-pudding for your lunch is cooking, and you know perfectly well that your cook stirs and tastes alternately.

Then comes a day when you have visitors. You are hopeful that your girl will do you credit, for you have been careful in giving and repeating instructions, and think that you have at last succeeded in instilling into her some idea of responsibility. But no ; your cook comes to the door, and insists on showing you and your guests a large blackbeetle which she tells you she has taken out of the soup with her fingers, and as you persist in taking no notice she promptly puts it back again. Then she may spill the contents of a dish over someone, or start to enjoy the leavings on a plate before removing it from the table. Then, as a climax, she appears at the door holding the hot joint in her hand, and inquiring in a loud voice where she is to put it. At length, after a rather painful half-hour, you order tea, but find that the kettle has only just been filled. If you reprove her, she is missing when you next want her. You feel discouraged, and decide that what you have often suspected is really the case—you are out of your sphere, and so is your girl. But the next day, possibly with a little altered treatment, you start all over again with renewed hope.

In the course of time, through the exercise of great

patience and perseverance, many of the early difficulties have been overcome. Gradually these untutored savages have been weaned from their crude ways, and have begun to realize some advantage in habits of cleanliness and order. Marriage claims them at an early age, but their training is not altogether lost; they are still kept under constant supervision, and encouraged to take a pride in their homes and household arrangements, which, though primitive, are yet far in advance of the wretched booths, surrounded by refuse of all kinds, to which they had been accustomed in their childhood.

From the original Girls' Industrial School the work has extended to the elder women. Regular women's classes and services are held, and the true position of womanhood and motherhood are put before them in very practical ways. The results have been most encouraging, and are especially noticeable in the increased number of baptism candidates and in the rapid decline of infanticide.

The interest evinced in the various industries introduced among the men and women, and the rapid advance which they made, induced us to try the experiment of organizing an annual exhibition with a view to stimulating them to further effort, and, by establishing honourable rivalry, to encourage them to greater industry and perfection in their work. The scheme was explained to the people, and a set time fixed for the exhibition. Not only were the mission Indians invited to compete, but the outlying peoples were also notified, and encouraged to show specimens of their more primitive productions. All evinced great keenness and enthusiasm, and a short time before the day fixed exhibits came pouring in. One old man brought a carefully-worked wooden pipe, another a wooden digger, another bows and arrows. An old woman brought specimens of her best pottery, and others followed with native blankets, skin skirts, woollen belts and bags, and various kinds of ornaments. The

station Indians contributed specimens of carpentry, lassos and saddle-gear, and produced fruits and vegetables from their gardens in order to prove the industry and attention they had given to their culture. The women brought samples of their sewing and dressmaking, and on the morning of the exhibition bread and cakes were baked to show their proficiency in these necessary household commodities.

A committee was appointed to examine the exhibits and to award prizes, and then the people were admitted to walk round and view the display, the successful exhibitors standing beside their products, showing evident traces of pride and pleasure in their handiwork. Later in the day competitors engaged in various tests of skill, such as log-splitting, pit-sawing, producing fire in the native way by friction, lighting a fire and boiling a kettle in the shortest time, and lassoing and yoking in teams of bullocks. A social entertainment was held in the evening, and there was much speech-making relative to the day's proceedings.

It must not be imagined that the social development of the people is confined only to the station Indians. Visitors from the outlying villages are constantly coming and going, some remaining for many weeks or months, during which they become accustomed to the new ideas and ways which their tribesmen have adopted. They have much to tell of all they have seen when they return to their villages, and thus the way is to some extent prepared for future advancement by reports of the attainments and proficiency of their fellows.

NOTE.—What is said about girls in Chaco kitchens only refers to the training of quite raw hands. Many had become clean, useful servants long before this school was established.

## CHAPTER IX

### MISSIONARY EXPLORATION

IN introducing to the reader the history of the Church in the Chaco, emphasis was laid on the fact that the field occupied was in many respects unique. In no way has it proved more so than in the difficulties associated with itinerant evangelistic work among the scattered villages.

In many parts of the South American Continent evangelistic work is carried on by a few men who travel from place to place, seeking opportunities to converse with people on spiritual subjects, distributing literature, and holding meetings and services when and where possible. In this way much lasting good is done. We all know the success which attends the efforts of the great Bible Societies. Some persons induced to buy a Bible, and led by the Spirit of God to read it thoughtfully, have in some cases been the means of influencing large numbers to turn to the Saviour of the world. But the success of such work depends upon meeting with people who can read, and who have sufficient knowledge and intelligence to benefit by what they read. Excellent results have sometimes followed a chance conversation, or even an occasional service with people who possess some knowledge of the Christian Faith and doctrines.

If once the evangelist can succeed in converting a few to the Christian Faith in any one city or village, he can safely leave these few to keep the lamp of Truth burning, and to propagate the new doctrines which they have received. An

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occasional visit in order to impart to them counsel, advice, and further instruction serves sufficiently to sustain them.

In the great native kingdoms of the African Continent populous centres are found more than sufficient to give ample scope to any one missionary or native trained teacher to devote his time to the evangelization of the people, who are in a position, although it may be of a rudimentary kind, to provide for their own needs, and to benefit by any opportunities given them to advance their social and intellectual position. The missionary in such a field can find a ready supply of sustenance for himself, and is therefore free to devote his whole time to spiritual work.

Among the lower races of the world, who live not only in extreme barbarism, but in a nomadic or semi-nomadic condition, and are never to be met with except in small numbers, the work of the missionary becomes a very difficult matter. It is among such a people that our work in the Chaco lies, and in order that the reader may appreciate and duly allow for all the difficulties in our way, it is necessary that he should bear in mind the peculiar conditions.

The life of a Church depends upon her missionary zeal, and the Chaco Church, after her firm foundation, had perforce to become a missionary one, or cease to expand, and eventually die. The nature of her missionary work has been up to the present, and for a long time to come must continue to be, of a twofold nature—first, missionary exploration and pioneering; and, secondly, itineration. By the former I mean the seeking out of new peoples; establishing friendly relations with them; studying the best means by which to reach them with the Gospel; and gradually preparing the way for Christian instruction.

By itineration I mean the regular visitation of villages where either Christians or inquirers are to be found, to impart further instruction to them, and to hold services. This



work should be chiefly in the hands of specially trained native teachers, and should be only superintended by the European missionary. Such work among a foreign people, kept perpetually in the hands of the European, will never prosper and become a permanency as it will if carried on by the people themselves.

The missionary explorer and pioneer in the Chaco does not attempt to preach or even indirectly introduce Christianity, unless under exceptional circumstances. This may seem an astounding statement to make, and in order to avoid any misconstruction it requires some explanation, since it is a difficult matter for people who are not familiar with wild and savage peoples, inhabiting a wilderness, to grasp the conditions existing there.

The missionary explorer hears from some Indians of a tribe or clan some two hundred miles distant, whose language is quite unknown to him, or of such dialectic differences that he will find it difficult to understand the people, or make himself understood. What he wishes to ascertain is the number of people living there, the kind of country they inhabit, under what conditions they live, what would be their probable attitude towards Europeans, and whether the time might be opportune for commencing a work among them. He sets out with a few Indian companions, one or more of whom may at some previous time have visited that district, and be known to some of the people. His first object is to make friends with them, and leave a favourable impression behind him. On arriving at one of the villages, he must be careful to observe as strictly as possible the rather formal Indian etiquette. He has not long to wait to know whether he is to be received in a friendly manner, or with cold reserve or suspicion, or with open hostility. All three forms of reception have been experienced by us on different occasions.

If the greeting is cordial, the people come out boldly and cheerfully to the outskirts of the village to welcome the visitor, throwing sticks and other missiles at their numerous and savage dogs in order to keep them at a safe distance. A sign of welcome is given by the chief, which varies somewhat among the different clans. In some cases a speech of welcome is given to which all the people attentively listen. "Thliyip nāk" (It is you?) are the usual words of greeting; to which the visitor replies, "Ahai, Koo" (Yes, it is I). He is then invited to dismount, and the chief's wife generally relieves him of his impedimenta, carrying which she leads the way to the open space in front of her hut, where raw-hide mats are spread on the ground, and he is given the sign to be seated. All these formalities are carried out in silence, and when seated, he is left alone for some time in order to rest, during which he is gazed at with curious eyes. After this interval the chief approaches, followed by the men, who seat themselves in a circle, of which the visitor and chief are the centre. A formal conversation is then commenced in the usual short, disjointed sentences, consisting of various queries as to where he has come from, and for what purpose, what was the condition of the track he followed, whether he encountered any game, and so on, each reply being very solemnly repeated by the hearers. This serious and formal inquiry is usually very prolonged, and it is a relief when food is at length produced, followed by the pipe, which is ceremoniously filled and lit by one of the women and passed round from mouth to mouth, this being the usual signal for all formalities to cease, and for the conversation to become general.

It is most encouraging to be welcomed in this friendly way, but the missionary explorer must be particularly careful in the course of conversation not to arouse the

suspicion or enmity of the people, and in no way to give offence.

There are many people of my acquaintance who have the idea that the messenger of the Gospel should, as soon as the necessary salutations are over, at once proceed to explain to the people the object of his visit, and commence telling them of God, the enormity of sin, the punishment of the wicked, salvation, the resurrection, and the future life. If the missionary adopted any such hasty tactics in the Chaco, the probability is that before he had proceeded very far in his conversation he would be convinced beyond a doubt that his wisest plan would be to make his escape as quickly and conveniently as he could, and not to visit that village again until the time was ripe for his message. To thus plunge into the subject of death, spirits, and an after-life would fill the people with so much fear and suspicion that the women and younger people would hastily absent themselves, and the men would become decidedly hostile.

It has been the lot of very few of my colleagues to visit a village or district where they and their teaching were not known to the people, and thus they have never found themselves in the difficult positions in which the few have been placed. In my own case, when I first entered upon this work, I adopted the popular methods of zealous but inexperienced Christians. I was anxious to win souls with as little delay as possible, to be loyal to my Master, and to show no fear in delivering my message. I therefore took the first opportunity to tell the people that I came to them as their friend to teach them about the great Spirit. I was unconsciously treading on very dangerous ground, and there is no doubt that I owe my life, humanly speaking, to the fact that my knowledge of the Indian language was so inadequate that the people could not clearly understand me. At that time, too,

I possessed a very scanty knowledge of their customs, superstitions and religious beliefs, and now I can see clearly what a great risk I was running.

Let the reader try to imagine an encampment of Indians, sixty or more in number, sitting round their camp-fires on some dark night. The stillness is broken from time to time by the weird sounds of nocturnal birds, and by the cries of wild beasts from the dark, dense forests near by. It may be that occasionally mysterious sounds are heard which the Indians attribute to the "kilyikhāma," or spirits which haunt the forest and swamp, and which are held in such awe by them. To spend a night in the wilds of the Chaco under such conditions gives rise to the most eerie feelings, which must be experienced to be fully appreciated, but it can be readily understood how inopportune such a time would be in which to introduce to a highly superstitious mind, such as that of the Indian, the subject of the spiritual and supernatural.

Imagine, then, the position of the missionary, welcomed by these simple people as a travelling guest, seated in the circle they have formed. They are straining a point in receiving him at all, for what little they have heard or experienced of the white man is not in his favour, and they have no knowledge whatever of missions and missionaries. He begins to tell them of the Flood, a subject he thinks will appeal to them. Inundations are common occurrences in their part of the Chaco, and they naturally regard such as lamentable misfortunes, since they and their possessions suffer considerably thereby. The missionary, however, tells them that this great flood, which was a much more extensive catastrophe than any they have record of, was sent upon mankind by the Great Spirit, his own personal Friend and Master, of whom he has come to tell them, that they too may know Him as their



AN INDIAN LAD AND BOTTLE TREE

The tree, a species of wild cotton tree, is regarded as sacred by many tribes. From it canoes and large beer vats are made.



AN INDIAN MOTHER AND CHILDREN

The hammock is the native cradle.





Friend. He endeavours to explain to them how good this Master is, but how can these simple savages possibly believe any being to be good, or desirable to know, who could in such a manner destroy humanity? From their own experience they know that they may expect floods, and they at once wonder who this strange foreigner can be who loves and obeys the powerful Spirit who, he says, causes such calamities. They are instantly filled with fear and dread, and, like true children of nature, they centre their fear in the person present. What if he, they argue, should prove to be a great witch-doctor, possessed of the power of inducing this Spirit to send such another disaster upon them. Has he not himself said that a man named Noah (probably an ancestor of his, else how could he know about him?) told the people among whom he lived of the coming of the flood? Fear may prevent them from immediately and openly attacking him, but they at any rate come to the conclusion that he is not a desirable visitor.

He passes on to tell them of the resurrection. Only a few days before he arrived a death had taken place in the neighbourhood in which they are encamped. The solemn funeral rites and mutilations are still vividly before their mind's eye, and they have not yet recovered from the fear of encountering the spirit of the departed. As the speaker proceeds to tell them of "the last trump," they at once picture to themselves the sounding of a great horn in the air. They can almost see the mutilated form of their late friend moving stealthily towards their encampment from the dark shades of the forest, and they are instantly filled with dread. They themselves have no idea of the resurrection of the body, although they believe in a life beyond the grave. Their instinct is to forget their dead, and never to refer to them. But this stranger graphically describes to them the

coming to life of all the past generations of their dead ancestors. Crimes without number are recalled to their memory for which the dead, brought back to life, will seek revenge. They are so horrified and frightened that they forthwith decide to have nothing more to do with this man ; for, were they to listen to his words, they realize that their life would be a misery, and that they would be continually living in the midst of haunting fears. They therefore lay some plot to rid themselves of his undesirable presence.

The reader must remember that these people are as children, with childlike imaginations. Just as a child believes in fairies and giants, and wonderful old women who can ride through the air, so these Indians take things in the most literal way, and it is difficult to give them any true sense of proportion.

No ; the missionary explorer must not attempt to touch on such subjects to a superstitious and barbarous people without some gradual and careful preparatory teaching. On his first visit he will find it more profitable to confine himself to less aggressive measures. He must first make friends with the people, and seldom condemn any of their customs and rites, and when he does so it must be only with a mild rebuke. By mingling freely with the people, he convinces them of his friendship and good intentions. He shows them how much they could improve their circumstances by carrying out certain simple reforms, and tells them that he has much important news ; but, as he cannot stay long among them, if they wish to hear it, they must come to the mission-station, where they will learn much that will profit them. He tells them how far he agrees with their traditions, and how it is that he happens to know more than they do ; and thus, without pushing matters, he establishes friendly relationship, and creates a desire in the people to visit him

and his friends. The people, not being on their guard against him, afford him an opportunity of adding to his knowledge of their customs and manners of thought. He hears new traditions from them, and learns more of their religious ideas, which on his return he imparts to his companions, and thus renders them more competent to deal with the people in after-years.

## CHAPTER X

### ITINERATION

IN the organization of the Chaco Church there is a very marked distinction between itinerating work proper and pioneering. The object of the former is to keep in touch with and influence those who have become Christians or who show some inclination to become such, and to endeavour to win over to Christianity those who have heard something of its teaching, but regard it either with hostility or indifference. This very necessary branch of the work of the Church is beset with difficulties and abounds in problems which are not easy to solve.

In a westerly direction from the River Paraguay to the Suhin frontier, and from the River Monte Lindo northward to the Rio San Carlos, the Indians have come into contact with, and have been influenced by, the mission to a greater or less extent. In the most remote villages they know our customs and something of our teaching.

On arriving at a distant encampment which we may not have visited for some years, we are not received in the suspicious and guarded manner which characterized the pioneer days, but either with a hearty welcome, free of all suspicion and reserve, or with a sullen submissiveness. In the first case the people are either conscious that they have done nothing to incur our serious displeasure, or at least they think we do not know of such. Belonging as we do to that peculiar party of foreigners whom they have received among



them as members, in a sense, of their own nation, and whom they have learned to trust and to like, they without hesitation receive us as very good friends. We speak their language, know their customs and manner of life, are full of news of the outside world, and are in every way as mere men most desirable friends in their eyes.

But as missionaries our power has become such that we exercise a restraining influence upon them, and they can no longer dare to disregard us. They would not now think of resenting our presence as they would have done in the past. We are of them who have weight in the councils, and they fear to give us offence. In most of the villages which are periodically visited some members of the party have previously spent some weeks or months at the mission-station, where they have attended services and submitted to our rule. It may be that some iniquity has been glaringly practised in their encampment, or that they have neglected periodically to visit the mission-station. However, if they imagine that they have in any way incurred our disfavour, and their consciences are uneasy, fearing rebuke, they regard our visit with no pleasure, but are sullen and unresponsive.

In 1910 I made a tour of some three hundred miles through a part of the Chaco lying beyond the direct sphere of the mission, but at every village my party was received with the greatest enthusiasm. At some of the encampments the people were so friendly that we could get no opportunity of taking a midday rest, and at all they expressed their regret that we could not stay longer with them. Along the whole route we found the people in the best of spirits, although only a few months before they had been greatly upset by a massacre of some of their tribe by the Paraguayan soldiery. They were, without exception, as friendly as our own mission Indians, and seemed to enjoy our company even more. We talked over old times, and joked and laughed

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together over our experiences. Men, women, and children all were happy and as free and easy as possible with us, and readily attended to all our needs.

When camping one night at a deserted village, a man who had heard of our arrival in the neighbourhood, but who did not know our exact location, took the trouble to track us in the rain until he discovered our whereabouts, and would not be satisfied until we struck our camp, Sunday though it was, and proceeded to his village. He greatly exaggerated the shortness of the road in order to encourage us to move, and magnified the number of his people as a further inducement. They were holding a feast, but on our arrival they at once inquired our will concerning it, as to whether we desired that they should discontinue it or not. At nightfall the merry-making ceased for a time, in order that all might attend the service which we held. They showed great disappointment when we had to leave them, and urged us to visit some of their kindred at neighbouring villages, which, however, we were unable to do. At almost every encampment we held some kind of service, and on the whole the tour was a successful one, and this, in spite of the fact that the peculiar form of the new religion already referred to (a crude mixture of Christianity and heathenism) had for some time been spreading among them.

Similar itinerating journeys have had more or less the same results; in fact, with few exceptions, I may say that we are welcomed and allowed to hold services without opposition at any village over an area of some seven thousand square miles, and not only are we welcomed, but the people met with would all, at some time or other, have either resided at or have visited our mission-stations, and would know something of our teaching.

The questions may naturally occur, "Why, then, with such opportunities before you, do you not prosecute itinerating

work more extensively? What a wonderful opportunity you have for thus converting the people to the Christian Faith! Yet why is it that you have comparatively so few baptized Christians on your Church roll?" Such questions as these are asked without taking into consideration the many difficulties connected with itinerating work. The climatic conditions of the Chaco are such that for months at a time travelling is impossible, or at least impracticable. During the season of floods it is much too wearing on both man and beast to travel about over so vast an area, most of it completely submerged. In the dry season it is difficult, indeed impossible, in some localities to obtain water, and the people break up into small parties in order to find sustenance. We are frequently short of horses owing to a peculiar disease from which few recover, and it is in many ways impracticable to take a bullock-cart through such a country, void as it is of roads. In times of sickness all our energies are required in attending to the people on our station; neither is it advisable to travel at such a time lest we get blamed for carrying infection. The needs of the mission-station often require our united efforts, as we have to consider the advantages of certain seasons in our building and transport operations. Again, the missionary cannot travel in the Chaco unless he carries his own provisions, for he could not subsist on native fare without endangering his health. It is not an easy task to carry a supply of food for at least a month; and on many occasions our rice and hard biscuits, which form our staple commodity, may be ruined by the first rainstorm. Certainly, our supply can sometimes be augmented by the product of the chase, but this causes delay, and cannot be relied upon. The various clans are extremely jealous of each other, and it is not advisable to show preference by visiting one set of people and neglecting another. The extent of country, the scattered nature of the encampments, and

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the small number of people inhabiting them, coupled with the fact that they are always moving from one place to another, make it difficult to spend even a day or two at each village.

But, in spite of these hindrances, it would be our duty to endeavour to itinerate at all costs if the results were likely to be adequate. Experience, however, has taught us that little teaching can be imparted during a stay of only a few days at a village. It is impossible to preach an appealing sermon to these people which will produce any lasting results. Everything has to be explained in detail, and the Indian's mind is such that he can only take in one point at a time. With the small European staff at our disposal it would be impossible satisfactorily to instruct the people by such short visits. Were they able to read, the difficulty would be somewhat overcome; but having to depend solely on oral teaching, it will be easily seen how inadequate the results must necessarily be.

It must be remembered that these people have to obtain their living by hunting and fishing, and that they are therefore, for the most part, occupied throughout the day, and too tired at night to benefit much from the instruction we could give them. If there happened to be a keen desire on their part to know the truth and to obtain further knowledge, much could be done; but this, unfortunately, does not exist except among a few. Those who do wish for Christian teaching are ready enough to take the trouble of going to the mission-station, where they can receive ready and adequate instruction, and be surrounded by an atmosphere better calculated to help them in the upward life.

Some unthoughtful people at home have an idea that the heathen are hungering for the Gospel. They need it, it is true, but as a whole they have no appetite for it. We, with fifteen centuries of Christianity behind us, as a general



mass, evince no pronounced hungering after Christian instruction. Of churches there are many, not sufficient for all, but, nevertheless, so inadequately attended as to conclusively prove that even Christian England is not keenly devoted to the Gospel. Why, then, should it be surprising if the heathen show no strong desire to attend services or receive Christian teaching? The wonder is that, in our own special sphere, with the limited means at our disposal, and the difficulties we have had to face, so much progress has been made.

There are Indians who have responded somewhat to Christian influences, but have soon relapsed and reverted to heathenism when left in their own villages. When an Indian expresses a desire to be taught and to follow Christ, but will not break with his native village and abandon his people to join us at the mission centre, where means of grace are more plentiful, it conclusively proves that his desire is but a shallow one, and that he is not really in a sufficient state of earnestness. We have also found that, with few exceptions, the Christian Indian is too weak to stand alone in the midst of heathenism. Can this be wondered at when the oldest converts of the mission are only of twelve years' standing, and the majority of but five or six? Considering the pit from which they have been raised, they are too young to be able to withstand such adverse circumstances as those with which they are surrounded.

The problem of the evangelization of the Chaco, notwithstanding its many difficulties, must, however, be faced, and the question is, How is it to be solved? I am perfectly convinced of one thing, and that is, that until the Indians themselves become the evangelists of their own people we shall never succeed in building up a powerful Church.

The first effort of the mission was naturally to gather together a small body of Christians as a nucleus. This part



of our work has been accomplished, and for some years we have been endeavouring to train and qualify the members of this small Church to undertake the evangelization of their country. School-work is at present impossible except at a fixed station, but many can already read intelligibly, and they possess books of the Bible and other literature sufficient to enable them to develop themselves to a certain extent, and also to instruct others. Efforts have been made to give special training to a selected number of the more promising converts, and for some years natives have been used to preach the Gospel to their fellows. Useful occupations have been taught them, and some have been occupied as assistants in school-work. But we cannot longer afford to keep the Christian Indians closed up on the station. In spite of their weaknesses they must go forward to mingle with and work among their heathen compatriots, otherwise they will get out of touch with them, and will lose not only their opportunities of doing good, but also strength of character from lack of having to meet difficulties and face opposition.

Indian converts, with very few exceptions, could not yet be trusted to go out singly or in twos, and remain for any length of time in heathen villages. But we are endeavouring to organize the sending out of small bands with instructions to visit and remain at certain villages for a specified time. Being sent thus in selected parties, they will be the better able to mutually support each other. Their duties will be to read and explain portions of Scripture to the people, and generally to try and win them over to a better and higher life. A main part of their programme will be to endeavour to induce interested natives to visit and remain at the mission-station, in order that they may receive instruction and come under better influences. Two or three such bands could easily be supervised by one of the missionaries, and as the native can live upon the natural products of the land, and, if

necessary, take his wife with him, the result will be that a much greater number of people will be reached, and more thorough work done than by the efforts of a single missionary.

This will also be the surest way of training them in evangelistic work. They will meet with opposition such as will not befall the European missionary. They will go among their people as ordinary members of the tribe, and will not occupy that position of authority and superiority which the white teacher cannot possibly avoid assuming. It will have the further advantage of making this Christian movement a native rather than a foreign one, and therefore more acceptable.

In God's own time we may hope that a mass movement towards Christianity will take place in the Chaco, and it will then be time to consider the further step of securing a suitable location for the people, where their environment and circumstances will be such that they can develop socially as well as in their Christian life. Such a goal is not beyond the reach of possibility, and we have already taken steps towards preparing the way for future eventualities, but it is as yet premature to disclose the nature of this plan.

Although the missionary cannot avoid taking the leading part among such a people, and to a large extent adopting the rôle of a ruler not only in the Church, but also in their social life, yet it must be borne in mind that the Indian is essentially a freedom-loving individual, and would perish rather than be coerced. Love, respect, and trust must be the ties which are employed to draw and bind him, and not a mere assertion of authority, however good the intention may be.

## CHAPTER XI

### WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH

THROUGHOUT the ages governments and religious and social systems have been found to exist in a form far in advance of the peoples whom they influence. The world's destiny has in a great measure always depended upon one or two nations leading the van, but the permeating of the vast mass of humanity is a process which requires centuries to accomplish. The point is that there must be an ideal to aim at, and that the leaders in the march towards this ideal must be far ahead of the people. A lamentable weakness has been that these leaders whose great intellects have grasped higher truths have been content to confine the knowledge of those truths to their own particular class, and thus the world has not benefited as it should by their superior enlightenment.

Take the case of the ancient Incas of Peru as an example. Although the popular idea is that they believed in the sun, and worshipped it as the Supreme Deity, erecting a temple at Cuzco in its honour, which contained a great disc of pure gold representing it, yet the Emperors and the more intellectual and higher classes unquestionably looked to Illa Tici Uira Cocha as the Supreme Creator and Author of all things. "The cult of Uira Cocha by the Incas was confined to the few."\* "Some of the Incas undoubtedly sought earnestly for a knowledge of the great First Cause, which they called Uira

\* "The Incas of Peru," chap. viii., by Sir Clements R. Markham.

Cocha." The sun was simply regarded as the originator of the clan to which the Inca belonged, but that being the ruling family, the commoner people came in time to worship the sun as if it were the Supreme God. From some of their poems it is quite clear that in the ancient Inca idea the Supreme Creator Uira Cocha corresponded in power to the Great God whom we ourselves worship. They seemed to have derived a knowledge of Uira Cocha from traditions handed down from some previous and great civilization which Sir Clements Markham refers to as the Megalithic Age. In these poems Uira Cocha is spoken of as forming man of clay, being called a king who foresaw and arranged all things. The sun, the moon, the day, the night, the spring, the winter, are all referred to as the works of Uira Cocha. He is called the Lord of all lords, the Lord of the Universe, the Lord of Divination, the Maker of all men, and the Creator of the world. "Where art thou? Thou mayest be above, thou mayest be below, or perhaps around thy splendid throne and sceptre." "This recognition of an almighty unseen Being who created and regulates all things visible was probably confined to the higher intellects, who had more time and were better trained for thought and reflection. The rest of the people would seek for visible objects of worship." All this shows that up to the time of the Spanish Conquest there existed amongst the Incas the knowledge of a high, pure, and beneficent Being, and that the more enlightened were not mere idolaters and sun-worshippers.

In our own day, as well as through past ages, we find a continual desire, however feebly or indefinitely expressed, towards finding some way by which the mass of the people suffering under poverty, distress, and oppression may improve their condition. Many schemes have been planned and attempted containing in themselves the germs of sincerity and idealism, but they have failed to work because the people

whom they were intended to benefit have not been sufficiently prepared for their reception.

It is a Divine ideal that all men should treat each other as brethren, and that lofty patronage and mere class distinctions should not exist—that, in plainer words, no man should consider another beneath him, nor treat him as an inferior. It is true that we are told to fear God, honour the King, and give due respect to magistrates and all in authority, but these must not forget that they are brethren with us, and that they bear rule merely as the agents of the common King and Father.

But man is not yet so trained and perfected as to appreciate the practice of universal brotherhood. The majority are such that if so treated they would abuse the rights thus given them, and would presume beyond what was proper and just. Such universal brotherhood can never be general until men have learned to love and mutually honour one another. But although this ideal is Utopian, it must nevertheless be taught and practised as far as possible in order that mankind in the mass may be prepared to receive it.

The shepherd tribes of Israel were destined by the Almighty to take a leading part in the world's history, and to become a great nation, honoured and feared by their contemporaries. But in order to fit them for this political vantage-ground, it was necessary that they should be taught in the hard school of Egyptian bondage. This experience, together with their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, served to weld them into national consistency, and to fit them not only for industrial pursuits and steady, laborious lives, but taught them also to value freedom and to exhibit the courage of the warrior, all which had to be acquired before they obtained possession of their heritage.

The medieval monks were in some cases men of great learning for their time, but in those days the tendency was



to confine education to the priesthood instead of imparting it to the masses. The result was that Europe was kept in a state of illiteracy, and thus became more easily ruled and exploited by the privileged class which monopolized learning.

We have always endeavoured to put before the Lengua-Mascoy Church the highest truths and ideals, but naturally, dealing as we are with a primitive, heathen, and unintellectual people, it is not to be expected that they can grasp to any great extent the full meaning of our teaching. Judging of the effect this has had upon our converts in proportion to their limited capacity to receive it, we can honestly say that in many cases the results are highly satisfactory. The same standard cannot be expected of the Indian as of the English Christian, but in proportion to the light and opportunity vouchsafed to them as great a change has taken place in many of these Indian lives as among the converted in England.

Our Chaco Church, although unique in many other respects, is no exception to the general weaknesses attendant upon the development of religious, social, and political systems. Naturally enough, those who first broke with heathenism did so from thorough conviction. They were, generally speaking, the best intellects and strongest characters, otherwise they would not have led the way. We knew perfectly well, and from time to time publicly informed our home supporters, that the day of weakness would arrive the moment that merely nominal Christianity with Church organizations, forms, and ceremonies began to assume power. The reason of this confidence was that we knew the weak would join us, or at least become favourable to Christianity, and just as through their weakness they would bend willingly to the system, so too they would, with few exceptions, remain weak.

We have generally found that those Indians who have been least pliable, and who have most vigorously resisted the

giving up of their old faith and customs in exchange for Christianity, have proved, when converted, the most sincere and worthy followers of Christ. The reason is not far to seek. Their resistance to a great extent indicates independence and strength of character, and when they do accept Christianity it is the result of true conviction. On the other hand, the pliable, easy-going Indian, always desirous to please and to choose the line of least resistance, is apt to prove a weak and shallow Christian. It is true that the Divine Grace counts for much, and that out of weakness the Almighty can produce strength, but it must not be forgotten that strength of mind and character are also His gifts, and that He endows men with such qualities, so that, when consecrated to His service, they may be fit for a leading position in His Church.

While always keeping in mind the fact that we were endeavouring to give to the Lengua-Mascoy people the best religious, social, and political organization which we could conceive for them, and which was naturally based upon that which we ourselves had been trained to appreciate, but modified as far as possible by conditions and circumstances peculiar to South American life in general and to that of the Indians in particular, we nevertheless realized that many disappointments must be in store for us, and that we could not force the pace beyond that of which the people were capable.

It would be unwise to allow a clever youth, because able to put things in an orthodox form, to be placed in a position to teach others when his own Christian and moral character is not equal to that of his less cultivated but more sincere, and consequently more influential, brother. When allowance is made for all the failings in the Indian Christian's character, and his sometimes crude and roundabout way of putting truths, he nevertheless carries much weight when witnessing to his own people, and they will often better understand such

truths when imparted to them in the true Indian way than when conveyed to them, even in good grammatical style, with an English colouring. Some missionaries never acquire the true Indian way of putting things; but a greater evil is that some of the younger converts try to copy the English way of expressing ideas, imagining that thereby they are showing their smartness. How much more forcible to the Indian does a prayer for protection become when expressed in these words: "O God, build a *corral* (or cattle-pen) around us, high and strong, so that we who are in cannot get out and thereby fall into mischief, and the evil that is without cannot get in to harm us." Thus I once heard an Indian pray. His hearers can grasp the full meaning of this, and it appeals to their natural life; whereas the great desire to have our excellent Church Prayer-Book translated as literally as possible for their benefit, proves in too many cases far above them. "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings," etc., although forcible enough to us, needs to be expressed in some such words as the foregoing to appeal to the Indian mind.

The life of a Church may justly be gauged by her missionary enterprise. A Church content to develop within herself and not to share her blessings with others is a dying one. The missionary work of the Church is of prime importance, not only because it extends the boundaries of the Church of God, but because it develops devotion and unselfishness in the parent Church, and if that is in a sound condition, her missionary enterprise is an index of her vitality. We felt, therefore, that the Lengua-Mascoy Church ought to become a missionary one, and that our commission was not to evangelize a single tribe, but all the Chaco tribes.

To penetrate into the far interior of the Paraguayan Chaco and there found another mission would be attended by many physical difficulties. We held, as far as our knowledge went, that the most practical way would be to advance simulta-

neously from the east, west, and north-west, towards the centre of the Chaco, and we have since found that our conclusions were correct. The civilization, the settlement, and the corruption of the Indian peoples are rapidly advancing in the Argentine Chaco. It was therefore necessary for us to lose no time in getting a hold of the southern and western tribes, before they became so contaminated, scattered, and disorganized as to make our work more difficult.

Swayed, therefore, by this desire to extend our work to the other Chaco tribes, some of the mission party were selected, in 1910, to begin work among the Indians of the Argentine Chaco, and this new mission, inaugurated under most auspicious circumstances, is now an established fact.

It is our hope and intention to work together as one united mission, and our aim is to link up the missions, when established among the various tribes, into one common whole, the several parts mutually strengthening and encouraging each other.

New circumstances are fast arising to make our work among the Lengua-Mascoy more difficult. Traders are entering the country, and intoxicating drink is now more easily obtained than formerly. The Indians under the mission's influence have undoubtedly increased in general intelligence and knowledge of the outside world, but they are consequently becoming more restless, and show an indication to resent being led by their teachers as in former years. We have no desire to keep them in tutelage, but the weakness is that their knowledge is not adequate to their desire for freedom and independence, and they are therefore the more likely to fall victims to evil.

While candidly admitting that great defects exist at present in the Lengua-Mascoy Church, we unhesitatingly affirm that there is a sincere faith among the majority of her members; and that in every way—religious, moral, and social



—great and permanent progress has been made. Only those who know the acute heathenism in which these people were reared can fairly appreciate the elevating, purifying, and life-giving power which the Gospel has produced among them.

Think of the contrast between one of the first Indian funerals which I witnessed and that of a baptized Indian woman. In the former case an old man who from his merry, happy disposition was nicknamed "Old Gaiety," and who had been a great friend of ours for some years, was dying. He was a victim to many barbarous outrages of witchcraft, and during his last days was practically starved to death. As his end drew near a gloom settled upon the people, and towards sunset a few men were told off to dig a rough hole in the ground near the edge of the forest. The poor old man's body, from which the breath had scarcely departed, was lashed by the neck and heels to a pole, and carried on men's shoulders to the burial-place. There, without care or tenderness, without a tear or expression of regret, and apparently with revulsion, he was hastily thrust into the hole in a sitting posture, barely clad in his ragged blanket. With his head almost touching the surface, loose earth was thrown over him and a few branches of trees were placed above. Then, after a scanty heathen ceremony, the men hurried back to the village, which they would have immediately burnt to the ground, and have betaken themselves to a distance to escape the malign influence of the spirit of the departed, had I not prevailed upon them to remain. They, however, would not desist from practising certain heathen rites. It was a night of fear and terror to the people, and of considerable personal danger to me, for I had incurred their strong suspicions, and had been the first stranger to take part in such a ceremony. This was in every respect a modified heathen burial, as all the influence which I possessed



at the time was brought to bear upon the people to prevent the more brutal practices generally resorted to.\*

Some thirteen years later, Senhik-etkuk (Celia),† the first Lengua-Mascoy woman to enter the Church of Christ, died after a short illness, during which she was carefully nursed and attended by our own doctor. She died in the night, and her body was reverently laid in the little Indian church till the morning. The corpse was neatly wrapped in a winding-sheet of calico; and after an impressive service, her body was borne by her relatives on a bier to the consecrated cemetery, and there she was laid to rest in a well-made grave. The men, women, and children who followed the body to the grave, carrying wild flowers in their hands, stood reverently while prayer was offered, and listened to words of comfort and hope. It was a stirring sight to see this group of sorrowing Indians thus committing to the grave the body of the first of their women who had witnessed for Christ, and it was an inspiration to listen to them singing in their own language, "There is a Happy Land," with the feeling that their sister was enjoying that happiness as her reward. Tears were shed, the flowers and wreaths were placed upon the grave, and the mourners returned to the village, sad but hopeful. Her old parents, for more than half a century heathens, but won to Christ through her instrumentality, while they mourned her loss, looked forward to the time when they would meet her again in that Happy Land.

The solemn service in the church; the procession to the grave; the reverent and careful manner in which the body was laid to rest; the absence of gloom and despair; the freedom from haunting fears and unspoken dread—what a change were all these from the mutilations, witchcraft, and

\* *Vide* "An Unknown People in an Unknown Land," chap. xvi., by W. Barbrooke Grubb.

† *Vide* Part II., Chapter VIII.

revolting funeral rites which we had witnessed in the past, when the people were in heathen darkness and without hope of the life to come! They now firmly believe in, and are comforted and cheered by, the fact that there is for them a glorious resurrection from the dead, and a blessed eternity beyond. They know their weaknesses, their lack of a fully consistent life, and their utter unworthiness for the reception of such blessings; but they realize and know that these are the free gift of God, and have been secured to them, not on account of their own righteousness, but because of the imputed righteousness of the Saviour who died for them.

What, again, could be more impressive than an adult baptismal service?—the candidates standing round the font, dressed in simple robes, humbly professing their faith in the Giver of life, publicly renouncing the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with bowed head receiving the sign of the Cross as a token that thereafter they shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified.

Or picture the solemnity of a Holy Communion service, with the natives, neatly dressed, reverently kneeling together with their English teachers, commemorating the Last Supper, many of them doubtless recalling their past evil lives, their witchcraft and their crimes, and thanking God in their hearts for the great Atonement which that commemoration service recalls to their minds.

When the weakness inherited from the past is remembered, as well as the many and serious temptations of the present with which old and young alike are constantly surrounded, it is not surprising that some have strayed and fallen back into evil ways, and, feeling ashamed of themselves, have tried to stifle their consciences and to forget their vows.

We must not try to hasten the development of the people, or feed them upon too strong a diet, or venture on an over-organized attempt at Church-life. New conditions of life,

new temptations, immature knowledge, the natural restlessness attendant upon changing from an old order to a new, the removal of old and trusted teachers to a distant sphere, supply quite sufficient strain on this infant Church without attempting to force its development beyond its power.

It is true that they have heard of the Indian nations lying to the south and west of their country, which their former friends have gone to evangelize, but they cannot grasp that the distance is comparatively slight, and that in a short time we hope to form a line of stations across the Chaco, thus establishing a connection with the Lengua-Mascoy Church and linking up the new work with the old.

Both in the Bolivian and Argentine Chacos we have met with Indians who have not only heard of us and of our work at Waikthlatingmängyalwa, but who have also been undoubtedly influenced by the mission to the Lengua-Mascoy. This confirms us in our belief that we shall eventually succeed in planting churches among the surrounding tribes. The result will be a reaction directly affecting the Lengua-Mascoy mission, and manifesting itself in fresh vitality and vigour. Thus we hope to uplift the standard of the Cross, and to establish the Church in the Chaco wilds on a firm foundation.

We do not regret having withdrawn these workers from the Lengua-Mascoy field, neither do we feel over-anxious about her future, "being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in her will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

## CHAPTER XII

### FUTURE OF THE CHACO CHURCH AND PEOPLE

It has been our endeavour in these pages to give the reader some idea of the primitive heathen state in which we found the Chaco people, and of the difficulties met with and the methods pursued in planting Christianity among them. We have given some account of the birth of the infant Church and of its development to the present day, together with such attendant civilization as we have been able to introduce.

This Church in the wilds is still in its infancy, and its future destiny it would be unwise to attempt to prophesy; but the interested reader will naturally inquire what the probability may be of this Church and people continuing to exist and develop, and what part, however small, they may possibly fulfil in the world's history.

To answer such natural questions is, however, a very difficult matter; so much depends upon circumstances. We believe, without a shadow of doubt, that this Church has some part to play, although perhaps it may be so small as not to attract public attention. The leading of Providence all through the history of this mission is too evident to allow us for a moment to doubt that the hand of God has been with us and that He has blessed and guided our work, and He who in His wisdom has caused this Church to exist will not let it fail until it has accomplished the full purpose of

His will. But as we have no means of knowing what His hidden purpose with regard to this Church and people is, we can only forecast the future by judging from the experiences of the past and the, to us, inevitable laws affecting these people in the present.

There is one thing which we must not overlook, apart from the future of this Indian Church itself: the influence that it has had directly and indirectly upon those outside of it. These people were looked upon as hopeless savages, doomed to extinction; it was thought impossible to Christianize or civilize them. Almost since the discovery of South America, the Chaco peoples have been looked upon as a scourge and nuisance which would have to be got rid of, and until recently few who knew anything about these tribes ever considered them worth helping or preserving. It is true that on the borders of the Chaco some of the tribes were sought for and utilized to help in cheap, common labour; but few ever thought that it would be possible that they might develop into peaceful, industrious citizens, and still less into Christian men and women who could take a useful place in the world, although humble, and be trusted in and depended upon. Of late years the neighbouring authorities have changed their attitude towards these aborigines, and there is now a strong effort being made in many quarters to befriend, help, protect and preserve these indigenous children of the land. A Society now exists in Buenos Aires for the protection and help of these aborigines; picked officials have been sent to some parts of the Chaco region to conciliate the tribes, and try and induce them to take to a peaceful and industrious life. On some of the sugar estates employing thousands of these Indians their health and welfare is carefully considered. Steps are taken to vaccinate them and so minimize the dread effects of the smallpox scourge, and any medical help which they will





BISHOP STIRLING WITH A GROUP OF MISSIONARIES

. The two Indians, Philip and James, were the first two converts of the Chaco Church.



accept is readily given them. The abuse of alcoholic liquor is checked as far as possible, and encouragement is given to those who try to do well.

Interest in missionary work in the Continent, especially among our own people, has been stimulated. Many South Americans and foreigners have already been impressed by what has been done. Paraguay is willing to admit all Indians qualified for it to citizens' rights. Missionary zeal at home has been encouraged and some new missionary agencies directly and indirectly stimulated through the example of this little Church in the wilds. Far distant Indian tribes have heard of the mission, and in proportion to their knowledge of it are disposed to receive its agents in a friendly spirit. In brief, apart from any direct benefit to the Mascovy tribe itself, the influence of this little Indian Church has had a far-reaching and beneficial effect.

But now let us consider the possibilities, as far as we can judge, which lie before this Church and people.

Were it possible for this mission to be left undisturbed by outside influences in the Chaco for another generation, it would be much easier to forecast the probable results of our work; but the advance of the world is so rapid in these days, and South America in particular is drawing so much attention towards its natural resources, that it will be impossible to work out slowly the development of these peoples undisturbed by the inrush of the restless outside world. Settlement is advancing apace, the waste places are being opened up, railways are penetrating the vast solitudes; the want of stability in Europe is causing more capital to flow into these favoured regions; the Governments are becoming consolidated and extending their rule. The Indian problem has to be solved; the wild men can no longer be left, as they have been for four hundred years, to their own devices. A policy of wholesale extermination cannot now be tolerated,

and the Governments are waking up to the necessity of taking the Indian question in hand themselves.

What the result may be we must draw from the analogy of the past in other parts of the Continent.

The Guarani in Paraguay were at an early date influenced very largely by the Jesuit missions, which found among these people one of their greatest missionary triumphs. These Guarani mixed to a certain extent with the Spaniards, and again with the mixed race, the product of this intercourse; they took to the ways of civilization, settled down as an industrious people, and nominally, at least, accepted a form of Christianity. Thus has been produced the Paraguayan nation, in which Indian blood still mingles largely.

The Chalchaqui in Catamarca, Tucuman, and Salta were likewise absorbed into the white population, and thus, far from becoming altogether extinct, survive and thrive, although in a modified form. Had they remained in their original state, and continued to fight out the battle of existence with the higher races, they must inevitably have perished.

The Fuegians, Patagonians, and some other tribes who have been brought into close contact with the white man, his vices and diseases, but failed to adapt themselves to the new conditions and amalgamate with the general population, will soon cease to exist, few only being now left.

In the case of the Quichuas, a civilized people previous to the advent of the Spaniards, numerous and consolidated, the case has been somewhat different. In spite of wholesale murder, oppression, and slavery, they still survive in considerable numbers as a practically pure Indian people, and as conditions advance cannot fail to leave a marked influence upon the countries which they inhabit, although in course of time they too must form part of the new race, neither Indian nor European, which is being developed in the Continent.

The Quichuas owe to a certain extent their continued existence as they still are to the fact that they inhabit altitudes to a great extent which are not suitable abodes for European races. The Fuegian, the Patagonian, and the Pampa, inhabiting the cooler regions of the south, well adapted for the peoples of Europe, were naturally overwhelmed by the gradual encroachment of the more vigorous and civilized races, who, being able to live there with their families, were thus saved to a great extent from the necessity of intermingling with the lower peoples. In the Chaco and other tropical parts unsuited to pure European races, the Indian, if he can only be induced to take to a settled, industrious, and peaceful life, has a much better opportunity of increasing and perpetuating his race; he, being able to stand the climate and conditions of life, will supply in a measure the necessary problem of labour, and thus be invaluable to the State, and will receive protection and encouragement. But I consider it impossible that any Indian race taking to civilization can long maintain its purity of blood and distinctive racial characteristics; we already see the intermixture of Indian and European blood to a small extent among the Mataco, Chiriguano, and other tribes. Those tribes that remain isolated and in a barbaric state must inevitably eventually disappear.



## CHAPTER XIII

### DIRECTING THE DESTINY OF THE CHACO RACES

THE question before us is what policy we are to pursue to prepare the people for the future.

It is clear, in the first place, that we must do all in our power to induce them to take to semi-civilized, peaceful, industrious ways. So long as they remain a nation of hunters, living in a barbaric state and refusing to become useful workers, extermination stares them in the face.

Secondly, it being impossible for the mission as such to find work under its own management for any number of these primitive people, what we must try and do is to teach those who are capable and willing to be trained useful occupations, so that they may become of value to the State, and thus be protected and preserved until they are able to hold their own as citizens.

For the rest, we must endeavour to bring them into contact with respectable employers who will treat them fairly and justly, and give us opportunities to reach them morally and spiritually. Really just and honourable employers of Indian labour can, and no doubt in the future will, be found who will deal fairly with the aborigines ; but experience has taught us that we must not as a general rule expect money-making concerns to consider the welfare of their employees, except in so far as it suits their purpose. These native races have not the intelligence of workmen of

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higher peoples, and can never co-operate in the defence of their own interests.

Some industries of necessity must be more just to their employees than others; the sugar industry, for example, requires a steady supply of cheap, peaceful labour; and such industries therefore find it to their interest, apart from any feelings of humanity, to consider the welfare of their workers, simply because not to do so would reduce the labour supply and ruin the industry.

Grazing industries do not require many employees, and numbers of Indians on their lands are therefore a hindrance.

Temporary industries, such as the cutting of timber, working of wild rubber, etc., have only to consider their immediate needs. Once these natural riches are worked out they have no more need of the Indian. While the price, therefore, keeps up they seek to make all they can, and it matters not to them whether the Indians perish eventually or not. As in the case of rubber atrocities recently brought to the public notice, the desire to exploit quickly the natural riches, and gather hasty capital, leads to abuses varying in degree in order to force the Indian to produce as much as possible; and as long as the Indians last long enough to exhaust the treasure, they care not how they suffer or die.

Natural humanity is the only check upon such a business, and where dividends are concerned we must not be surprised if humanity is pushed aside; it is so all over the world, and is only a matter of degree: the lust for wealth tends to kill all higher sentiments.

In such cases it is to the governing powers we must look, who have, or ought to have, the general welfare of the whole State in view, and ought to make laws to protect the weak. In such cases all we can do is to try and bring influence to bear upon the governing powers, and by every legitimate means rouse public opinion in defence of the weak.

It is clear, therefore, that we must look to the more settled industries as an outlet for the Indian peoples, thankful indeed if we find employers whose moral sense acts as a check upon the undue lust of gain. We have found some such in the Northern Argentine, may find them in Bolivia, but are not likely to find them except to a limited extent in Paraguay.

We have already during the last twenty years proved, although on as yet a small scale, that these Indians are capable of becoming Christians, not merely in name, but in having their lives influenced, uplifted, and guided by the revealed Faith which they have received. We have proved that they can be won from their nomadic and barbarous life and take to settled, peaceful, and industrious ways; that they are capable, after due training, of deserving citizenship in a civilized state, as deserving, to say the least of it, as many of the lower classes in neighbouring states; that they are capable of receiving elementary education, of practising thrift, and benefiting by commerce; that many of them, with even a limited training, can become fairly good workmen, and acquire a fair proficiency in the management of tools; some have made good sawyers, fencers, bullock-cart drivers, cattlemen, butchers, and rough carpenters. The women, with training, soon learn household duties, and many make better servants than most of the rougher people in the more backward parts of the neighbouring states. Many who are well capable of judging, and yet are in no wise interested in missions, or even particularly friendly to Christian effort, have expressed their admiration for the proficiency of these people. We have proved that they can be law-abiding, honest, trustworthy, reliable, and easily managed when properly treated, and we hold that—given equal opportunities—most of the Chaco Indians in time could be similarly influenced, and thus become a strength and a profit to the various states. But in order to thus win these peoples from

barbarism the work must be done by those who will devote themselves to such enterprise, and make a speciality of studying the Indian, and, of course, time must be allowed. Where the evil influence of unscrupulous and unsympathetic foreigners exists, our work will naturally be retarded and made more difficult. I have myself seen the change that has taken place among the Chiriguano and other peoples who have been influenced by other missions, or who have been brought into contact with considerate Europeans or South Americans who, instead of ill-treating, have tried to make the best of these peoples.

The labour question in these regions being such an important one, and becoming daily more urgent, it would be a thousand pities to neglect these populations, and instead of trying to develop them to allow them to perish. There is no reason whatever why the Indians should decrease; on the contrary, by improving their condition, enlightening them, and protecting them, they would undoubtedly increase; their tribal wars and injurious customs will give way before good rule and Christianity, and due precautions taken will prevent their devastation by disease. We are convinced, therefore, that under favourable conditions there is a useful future before these peoples. One thing is of paramount importance, and that is, that they are as soon as possible given useful and profitable employment. Industrial missions in such a country and among such a people would perhaps solve the problem of their future better than anything else, but to carry out such adequately would entail the purchase of large reserves and the employment of vast numbers, and for many reasons—chiefly lack of funds and suitable men to carry on the work—such a gigantic undertaking is almost beyond the possibility of missions at present. It is true that much could be done by simply preaching the Gospel throughout the tribes, but as converts from such a people would, if left much to themselves,

prove weak and almost incapable of holding their own, especially when exposed to adverse foreign influence, we should still be face to face with the danger of their final destruction. It is useless to think of these peoples being able with little or no outside help to develop a creditable future. Prudence and common sense induce us rather to look for success by seeking opportunities in places where these peoples can find profitable and safe employment in large numbers, such as on large agricultural estates where their labour is valued, and where thousands may often be maintained to the profit of the owners. We must seek the co-operation of such employers; without their sanction and goodwill we cannot work profitably among the Indians they employ, but granted that we obtain such, it would not be difficult to establish industrial schools, as the employers would readily see that it would be to their profit to have trained and disciplined, instead of raw, labour. If we could show satisfactory results, the question of expense would naturally cease to be an insuperable problem. As far as we are able we must secure reserve lands for the Indians, and carry on our work as far as possible independently of outside well-wishers.

The work of evangelization among the Indians depends a great deal upon our facilities for constantly influencing, guiding, and training our converts, and this naturally becomes easier if we can find a large number of such Indians profitably employed in one place; it is very difficult indeed to deal with nomadic barbarians. So far we have built up a small model Indian community, but our object is not to be content with proving on a small scale what can be done, but to actually do what ought to be done—viz., reclaim the Chaco peoples for civilization and for Christ. Time and circumstances are pressing upon us, and the task we have set ourselves to do is a Herculean one. It is not sufficient to work out quietly from



our present centre, the evils of civilization are marching too rapidly upon us ; we must seek as well, and as a matter of fact we are doing so, to establish ourselves on the outside rim in order to influence the peoples coming most in contact with the outside world. If vice, disease, and conflicts with the settlers overwhelm these, our central position will not long remain unscathed. We must seek to win a foothold all along the borders while still vigorously pushing our work in the interior, we must endeavour to bring the tribes together in friendly intercourse and pursue a united and systematic plan of evangelization.

The question of intermarriage between Indians and non-Indians will spread fastest on the borders, and so to avoid a dangerous increase of corrupt mixture we must endeavour to influence as well the Indian progeny of such alliances, because in time they must inevitably mix with the peoples of the interior. This can only be done by uplifting the moral standard through the beneficent influence of Christianity. It is certain that as we prove successful in our work, the governing authorities will aid us in our efforts, and thus beneficent laws may be obtained for the protection and help of the aborigines.

The Lengua Church, being the only Christian establishment that we have at present, will, I hold, be greatly stimulated and benefited when we can bring home to them that other kindred tribes are coming under the same influence, and show them that there is a scope and a future before them which is well worth their best efforts. Could we reclaim the Chaco peoples, the power thus shown of Christianity to uplift and redeem could not fail to affect the surrounding civilized peoples, stimulate and encourage the whole Christian Church, and prepare the way for further work in the vast Amazonian region, where pagan tribes still exist untouched. Our effort is one well worthy of anything we spend upon it, whether life

or money. We have begun well ; we are in a strong position, and in spite of the immense odds and difficulties against us, the only thing I can see that can prevent the final triumph of the Cross will be if we are restricted by want of men and means, by those who own allegiance to the Lord, and are not in time, and therefore unable to secure an adequate foothold before outside evil influences prove too strong for us. We have no time to lose ; already we are almost too late, and men of experience outside of our mission circle, but wishing well to our efforts, have frequently assured me that as far as human foresight can tell, the next few years will either give us the hold we require or close the door against us. We cannot altogether trust to the experience of man or seeming probabilities ; these peoples for whom Christ died are infinitely more to Him than they are to us, and while doing our utmost and using all the knowledge and foresight He has given us, and laying our plans as wisely as we can, we must leave the final issue of these peoples, practically ignored by the Christian world ever since their discovery four hundred years ago, in His hands.

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